

# ESCHATOLOGY

The meeting of the Universal Christian Council at Evanston, Illinois, in the fall of 1954 helped to make the word *eschatology* somewhat familiar to newspaper readers. It has long been a familiar word in theological circles, meaning the study of the various aspects of the ideas connected with the second coming of Christ, the resurrection, and the judgment of all humanity dead and alive. It comes from the Greek word *eschatos*, meaning "the last" or "the extreme" of anything—the end of a stick or the end of a road. Thus the consideration of any or all of the subjects connected with the end of the present order of the world is included in the word.

The parable of the wheat and the tares, as recorded in Matthew 13, has made this general subject familiar to students of the Bible. In explaining the parable Jesus said, "The field is the world; the good seed are the children of the kingdom; but the tares are the children of the wicked one; the enemy that sowed them is the devil; the harvest is the end of the world; and the reapers are the angels." Matthew 13: 38, 39. He further explained that both the wheat and the tares, the righteous and the wicked, would be allowed to "grow together until the harvest." (Verse 30). When we remember that "the harvest is the end of the world," it is plain that there cannot be any period before the coming of Christ for a worldwide peaceful, sinless condition, in which all men will be converted and turn to God. The Master went on to say, "In the time of harvest I will say to the reapers, Gather ye together first the tares, and bind them in bundles to burn them: but gather the wheat into my barn." Verse 30.

The theory of world progress toward something like moral and social perfection is directly contrary to the teaching of the Bible. Nothing resembling it is to be found in the Holy Scriptures. The idea is based entirely on wishful thinking and on a superficial view of the history of the past century or two, ignoring or twisting the history of the preceding thousands of years. The elaborate scholarly works of Arnold Joseph Toynbee ought not to have been necessary to teach the world the falsity of this theory of world progress. Toynbee found it hard to decide how many successive cycles there have been of what we term civilization, alternating with the periods of decay and barbarism, the whole comprising the long total of the play and counterplay of the unseen forces of good and evil between Jesus and His relentless adversary.

Every high school student reads about the Renaissance that preceded and prepared the way for the Reformation. This was a revival of the literature and the civilization of the Classical period of Rome and Greece. But the Graeco-Roman civilization was itself a renaissance. The preceding age of Crete, a thousand years before, had been superior in many of the arts and crafts to the days of Socrates and Augustus. And still older than the golden age of Crete was, of course, the age of the Pyramid builders of Akkad and Ur.

The sophisticated, artificial life of every successive civilization produces conditions that make it extremely difficult for the Creator to gain the attention and obedience of the individual soul. "The true Light which lighteth every man that cometh into the world" suffers too much chromatic aberration from the prejudices and false ideals generated by traditional habits and customs. Thus, when the Manager of the universe in His wisdom sees that the opponents of His people and His truth are in danger of getting out of hand, He removes His protecting hand, and the great destroyer is permitted to wipe out that particular form of civilization. Then He can initiate new conditions of life, under which, after a few more centuries, there may be promise of better results.

The scientific discoveries and mechanical inventions of the past two centuries have brought about speedy travel and almost instantaneous communication throughout the world. This has resulted in our realizing that the human race is now one big community—albeit a restless, quarrelsome community.

The reason for this plan of divine Providence to make the world one community in the time of the end becomes clear with a little careful consideration. Time was running short. Because the end of the ages was coming on, plans would need to be laid for closing out all the affairs of human history in a reasonable, dignified way, with a timely warning and a merciful admonition; for “surely the Lord God does nothing, without revealing his secret to his servants the prophets.” (Amos 3:7, R.S.V).

In accord with this principle, Jesus declared, “And this gospel of the [coming] kingdom shall be preached in all the world for a witness unto all nations; and then shall the end come.” Matthew 24:14. Then in the fourteenth chapter of the Revelation, just before the account of the harvest, or the end of the world, as given in the last half of this fourteenth chapter, we find a unified group of three divine messages which are going to be proclaimed to every nation, and kindred, and tongue, and people. The first is a form of the gospel especially adapted to the intellectual climate of our times with its evolutionistic philosophy, declaring that the hour of God’s judgment is come, asking our generation of pantheistic evolutionists to worship the personal Creator, and warning against those who give worship to the opposing powers of earth who will be arrayed against God and the people of God in these critical times. These faithful people of God are described as “they that keep the commandments of God, and the faith of Jesus.” (Revelation 14:6-12).

As we look around to see if there is anything going on in our modern world corresponding to these divine messages warning about the end of the world, we see the people called Seventh-day Adventists, who for over a hundred years have been claiming that they are giving these very messages. They constantly use these verses of the fourteenth chapter of Revelation as their slogan, the keynote of all that they believe and teach. And they have succeeded in planting their sanitariums, schools, publishing houses, and mission stations in just about every part of the inhabited globe. They are in dead earnest. Their zeal and sacrificial giving are a constant challenge to others. If they are not fulfilling this divine prophecy, then who is? We definitely seem to be living in the very end of the age. Just such a divine warning is now due. While nobody else pretends to be doing this sort of work, the Adventists claim to be doing it. Why should not every intelligent person take the time to at least examine their message and their work to see if they are divinely sent? The rise and fall of many successive civilizations have already been mentioned. Many great cities, like

Thebes, Nineveh, and Babylon; many mighty nations, like the Hittites, the Assyrians, and old imperial Rome, have had their day, have reached the end of their allotted probation, and have been extinguished by the God of heaven, whom their people have forgotten or continued to despise. Then why may not just such a doom overtake the world? Why does the Creator, the patient, kindly Creator, not become tired of the constant tendency to degenerate, the perpetual need for renewing a disintegrating civilization? Why does He not wipe out the entire festering mess and have a clean, happy universe with not the slightest tendency toward evil? Someday He is going to do just that. But first the entire universe must become thoroughly sick of sin in all its forms, the deceptive and seemingly attractive forms as well as the repulsive. The entire onlooking universe must become fully convinced that God’s ways and plans are always best. And this radical change in the divine method of handling the problem of sin and evil is what is embraced under the term “eschatology.”

It is unreasonable and even unthinkable that a wise and good God is going to continue the career of sinful mankind indefinitely. Neither the Bible nor the experiences recorded in history tell us that human nature is showing the slightest tendency of outgrowing what E. A. Hooton of Harvard terms man's "aboriginal cussedness," or what the Bible calls sin. Moreover, the small percentage of individuals who are cured of it through true religion is not increasing. More heathen people are being born every day than are being reached by the gospel in a month. A well informed recent estimate is that the world's population increases every year by over forty million persons, the overwhelming majority in lands where Christianity is not popular. Since 1800 the earth's population has almost tripled, while the death rate has fallen sharply. Even in so-called Christian lands how small is the number who are true Christians!

Europe and other parts of the Old World, like Mexico and Peru in this hemisphere, are dotted with the ruins of dead empires and forgotten civilizations. As cities and nations one after another have all had their day, *why not a world?* This is what the Bible tells us from beginning to end. And God's merciful warning is now being sounded throughout the earth. What we term "modern times" or "our day" the prophecies of the Holy Scriptures repeatedly call "the time of the end." But the end of human history is only another chapter in the larger problem of God's method of handling the problem of sin and evil for the universe as a whole, which has resulted from the cosmic mutiny of Lucifer and his followers. This cosmic rebellion was initiated at the headquarters of the universe long before the beginning of this earth's history. In His wisdom the Creator did not at once destroy the rebels, but after expelling them from heaven permitted them to transfer their evil schemes to this earth, where by deception their leader seduced the first parents of the human race. Thus all human history—including the Incarnation, death, and resurrection of Christ, and His reinstatement in heaven as the acting Manager of all God's universe—is only a part of the much larger, much more important, history of the great drama of the ages. The period called in prophecy "the time of the end," the century or two that we call modern times, is a milestone of great importance; and its characteristics will be the subject of the succeeding chapters.

## BEASTS AS PROPHETIC SYMBOLS

In the Book of Daniel four long lines of prophetic symbols run from the days of the prophet down to the close of human history. The third of the series is in the eighth chapter, with an explanation of the time element extended into chapter 9. The chief symbols in chapter 8 are a ram with two horns, interpreted by the angel as representing the kingdom of Medo- Persia, and a goat with a great horn between his eyes, the goat meaning the kingdom of Greece, and the great horn being its first king, Alexander the Great. After the goat had demolished the ram, his great horn was broken; and in its place sprang up four horns, representing the quadripartite division of Alexander's empire. Out of one of the four another horn appeared, little at first, but becoming exceeding great and doing amazing things in a deadly war against God's holy sanctuary and His people. In introducing his explanation of the various symbols, the angel cautioned Daniel that a complete understanding would be attained only long afterward. "Understand, O son of man, that the vision is for the time of the end." Daniel 8:17, R.S.V. "It pertains to the appointed time of the end." Verse 19, R.S.V. In the very last chapter the angel again declares, "But you, Daniel, shut up the words, and seal the book, until the time of the end." Daniel 12:4, R.S.V.

From these and related passages we learn an important principle in the interpretation of the prophecies. God never intended that the prophet himself or the people of his time should understand the latter parts of any long line of prophetic symbols. This is partly because of the nature of things and partly because of divine purpose in giving these prophecies. Each of Daniel's four lines of symbols foretelling the then future history of the world begins with very simple, localized pictures; but they all become more generalized, broader in scope, and more abstract in meaning as they progress. This is because the work of God in the days of the prophet was small and local in extent, centered in the lands around the eastern end of the Mediterranean, now termed the Middle East. The organized opposition to the work of God, symbolized chiefly as wild, ravenous animals, was similarly localized. But as history unfolded, first as the result of Pentecost, and again in modern times as the result of modern mission work and the circulation of the Bible in a thousand languages and in every land and dime, the work of God is today global in its extent. Similarly the devil's organized opposition to God's work is on a worldwide scale. Hence the prophetic symbols, though beginning with objective, localized pictures like kindergarten models, given chiefly for identification purposes or for getting the inquirer on the right track, must necessarily take on more generalized significance in our day. *They have to become more abstract in meaning because they have become more global in character.* For these reasons alone, if for no others, the people in the days of Daniel could not be expected to understand the prophecies very far in advance. They were timed by Providence for the benefit and guidance of the people living in the time of the end.

The chief purpose of each of these time prophecies was to point toward the same end. A profusion of statements in the Bible shows that God plans to focus on the last generation of mankind a universal showdown on basic moral issues, between right and wrong, over the question of obedience or disobedience to the Creator. This final test of loyalty will not only be global in extent, but it must also be concerned with more or less abstract principles of right and wrong. All the long lines of prophecy must necessarily concentrate on the critical choices between life and death to be made by this last generation. This is why the latter parts of all of Daniel's four lines of prophecy take more time and space than all the previous parts put together. It is also the reason why the Book of Revelation enlarges so much on the last parts of Daniel's predictions and why so much space in the Revelation is devoted to this final crisis. Hence it could not be expected that the people in ancient times could understand very much of what this final struggle would be about. It did not particularly concern them

anyway; God gave these predictions especially for the last generation. These prophecies pertain "to the appointed time of the end." (Daniel 8:19, R.S.V).

Somebody has said that history is prophecy read backward. This may seem like a whimsical way of stating the case, but the two are certainly reciprocals, just two ways of saying that a divine Hand is managing all the affairs of the life of mankind. Then, too, symbolic prophecy has a large element of true poetry about it, divine poetry, for it portrays nations and ecclesiastical organizations as they appear to the onlooking universe in heaven.

The seventh chapter of Daniel presents four symbolic animals—a lion, a bear, a leopard, and a fearsome nondescript beast of horrible aspect and behavior. These four symbols plainly parallel the four metals of the image of chapter 2—the gold, the silver, the brass, and the iron. These two parallel lines of prophetic symbols accurately symbolize the successive empires of Babylon, Medo-Persia, Greece, and Rome. Gibbon commented, "The images of gold, or silver, or brass, that might serve to represent the nations and their kings, were successively broken by the iron monarchy of Rome." But we should go to the New Testament to understand fully how the powers of earth are looked upon by God and the inhabitants of heaven. In chapter 12 of the Apocalypse (Revelation) a monstrous fiery red dragon is described as attempting to destroy the Infant Christ as soon as He was born, and then persecuting with deadly hate the church of Christ for 1260 years. With still another burst of murderous persecution at the last of time, the dragon relentlessly pursues the remnant of the woman's followers, who "keep the commandments of God, and have the testimony of Jesus Christ." (Revelation 12:17).

Catholics and Protestants are generally agreed that this red dragon means imperial Rome, the Rome of the Caesars. The Greek word here translated "dragon" originally meant any large reptile, such as a crocodile or a python, but eventually was used in a mythical sense, probably reminiscent of the old dinosaurs, some of which were nearly a hundred feet long and weighed as much as eight or ten elephants. The dragon's chief characteristic in prophecy is the employment of force and terror against the people of God, in contrast with the seductive deceit and cleverness of the beasts mentioned in chapter 13.

In Revelation 12:9 the dragon is identified as the devil. From this divine explanation we might infer that other symbolic beasts of the prophecies of Daniel and the Revelation are also probably meant to represent the various phases of Satan's evil work in using the nations as his puppets. The evil one does not appear personally on earth, but he employs every human organization he can to oppose the work and the people of God. God uses a different kind of animal as a symbol of His work. Throughout Old Testament times a lamb or young sheep was almost invariably used to represent God's work or God's plans for the human race. And in the New Testament Jesus and His work were symbolized by a lamb, its peculiar characteristic being perfect harmlessness, complete lack of self defense, and non-retaliation for injuries received or impending. What other living thing is such a perfect example of these divine traits? And how complete the antithetical contrast to the prophetic symbols chosen to portray Satan and his work!

John the Baptist proclaimed Jesus as "the Lamb of God, which taketh away the sin of the world." In the Revelation the ascended and glorified Christ is spoken of as a Lamb over two dozen times. Hence there can be no question about divine Inspiration's having chosen this animal as a symbol. Accordingly, all the other beasts used in prophecy may be understood in antithetical contrast to the divinely chosen symbol of a lamb to represent Christ and His work for the human race. Three other animal symbols are found in this last half of the Revelation: two in chapter 13 and the third in chapter 17. These must be given briefly here, with fuller consideration in subsequent chapters. The first symbol in chapter 13 is a beast with seven heads and ten horns arising out of the sea. It is described as having the body of a leopard, the feet of a bear, and the mouth of a lion—naming the symbols of Daniel 7 in

reverse order. Daniel was looking at the series as reaching forward into the future, but Johns saw the same series backward.

The powers represented by the leopard, the bear, and the lion had already passed into history; and this wild beast from the sea would seem to correspond to the fourth of Daniel's series, the nondescript beast with great iron teeth, almost beyond description for its ferocity and cruelty. The subsequent details, however, concerning this leopard beast of Revelation 13 show that it corresponds more precisely with the arrogant, blasphemous horn growing out of Daniel's nondescript beast. Both symbolize the papal form of Rome, and each is often called the antichrist, a name which may be used for convenience in our future references to it. This leopardbeast, the antichrist, carries on a blasphemous war against God for forty-two months, a period also spoken of in parallel prophecies as 1260 days or years, extending from A.D. 538 to 1798, a period and its dates so well established in prophetic studies that they do not require further discussion here.

One important point about this leopard beast with the seven heads and ten horns is given in verse 3: "And I saw one of his heads as it were wounded to death; and his deadly wound was healed: and all the world wondered after the beast." The incidents here mentioned will require special attention. Attempts will later be made to show that this period between the infliction of the deadly wound and its healing corresponds to modern times and is the period spoken of in Daniel as "the time of the end." Since the deadly wound and its healing are spoken of in the same sentence, many have drawn the conclusion that the two events follow in comparatively quick succession. Instead, a century and a half have already elapsed since the deadly wound was inflicted, and we do not know how much more time is involved, for the deadly wound is still not completely healed.

The second symbol of Revelation 13 is a two-horned beast arising from the earth, which appears about the time that the preceding leopard beast went into captivity, or received its deadly wound. This two-horned beast is at first mild and gentle, for it has two horns "like a lamb." But it changes radically and finally speaks "as a dragon." In chapter 20 it is called the "false prophet," a term used in two other passages, Revelation 16:13; 19:20. It is described as acting like a deputy or partner of the leopard beast after the latter recovers from its deadly wound, its death stroke. Finally these two are both cast alive into the first lake of fire at the second coming of Christ (Revelation 19:20), proving that both exist together until the close of human history. The second lake of fire is described in Revelation 20:10 and is distinctly associated with the close of the thousand years. See *Seventh-day Adventist Bible Commentary*, Vol. 7, pp. 875, 876.

The series of seven heads of the leopard symbolize the seven more or less successful attempts of Satan to gain control of the rulership of this world. This series could be interpreted as beginning with the first Babylonian empire under Nimrod, soon after the Tower of Babel, which with the second Babylonian empire in the time of Nebuchadnezzar and Daniel constituted the first of the seven heads. Then followed Medo-Persia, Greece, and imperial Rome, making four. Papal Rome was the fifth. These would then make up the five which the angel said were fallen at the time then spoken of, which is here taken to be during the time of the deadly wound, our present age. We shall try to determine what world power is meant by No. 6, the one the angel said was then existing. Some believe that No. 7 is the image of the beast which the people are induced to make, and No. 8 the revived or rejuvenated Papacy, being just one of the seven, or No. 5 resurrected as it were to life. Or perhaps No. 8 may mean the personal appearance of Satan himself, a view held by many. These points will all be considered more fully later.

One more symbol must be included in this outline sketch, the spectacular combination of the drunken woman and the scarlet-colored beast, as given in Revelation 17. Strangely enough, this chapter seems about the last of all to be clearly understood, though when rightly interpreted, this chapter proves to be one of the most important and enlightening of all the prophecies. Since the dragon, the leopard beast, and the scarlet beast all have the same seven heads and ten horns, it seems feasible that they must be closely related in meaning, if not in some ways identical. But the variations in the specifications about these horns and heads should be highly informative. And these variations could be taken to indicate that these three symbolic beasts represent essentially the same anti-Christian, devil-inspired powers of earth, but at successive stages in the world's history. The dragon has the crowns on the heads; it is a generalized symbol, applicable to the entire line of human history, but most typically representative of the terror and brute force of pagan imperial Rome. The leopard beast has the crowns on the horns and applies chiefly to the long period of 1260 years, during which the many nations of western Europe were under the domination of the Papacy.

The ten horns of the scarlet beast of chapter 17 have no crowns upon them, suggesting that this vision applies at a later period, after the ten horns have ceased to do the bidding of the Papacy, a fact further suggested by the statement that these ten kings "have not yet received royal power," or the power to oppress or lord it over the minds and lives of men; "but they are to receive authority as kings for one hour, together with the beast." (Revelation 17:12, R.S.V). In other words, at the time here spoken of intolerance and persecution had ceased for the time being, but would again be revived, along with the power of the beast from the abyss, the bottomless pit. And how accurately this describes our own times, when the power to persecute has been quiescent for nearly two centuries, but when the ominous signs of the revival of intolerance are visible to all! These differences regarding the crowns then suggest that the same devil-inspired, anti-Christian powers are being shown at different stages in history.

The fact that the drunken woman on the scarlet beast means a period in history down very close to the end is indicated in several other ways. It is one of the angels with the seven last plagues that shows this vision to John, and the seven last plagues apply just before the second advent. Also the fact that the woman and the beast are differentiated would seem to mean that the time here represented is when the world in general has learned to think of the church as distinct from the civil power. This intellectual and even practical distinction has come about only in modern times, the time of the end. Again, the fact that in this vision the woman and the beast are shown to the prophet in a "wilderness" (verse 3) probably means that it applies at a time when both the woman and the beast are having a "wilderness" experience, during the time of the deadly wound of the leopard beast (Revelation 13:3). This of course means modern times, the two centuries since the power to burn "heretics" was taken away from Rome. How constant have been her nostalgic complaints that she is being hindered in her divine right of ruling the world as she used to do. This is her period of widowhood (Revelation 18:7), which she hopes will soon be over. It is her "wilderness" experience.

As this is merely a preliminary outline of what will appear in more detail in subsequent pages, I shall not now give the detailed explanation of the symbols of this seventeenth chapter. The general meaning, however, is plain. The drunken woman, named Babylon the Great, means more than the Catholic Church. She represents the devil's style of false religion of all time, from Nimrod's first blending of civil government and religion down to the revived, or reestablished, Roman power during the very last days of human history. The scarlet beast which serves as her mount symbolizes the devil's style of civil government during the same long period of time. But, as before stated, the point of time from which the beast and its rider are seen by the apostle is our own day, the time of the end, *not* the time of the Roman emperors.

This time viewpoint gives us the key to unlock the paradox, the apparent flat contradiction, between verses 8 and 10. In one verse the angel explains that the beast “was, and is not; and shall ascend out of the bottomless pit” (verse 8), while in the other John was told concerning the seven heads or kings, “Five are fallen, and one is, and the other is not yet come” (verse 10). In other words, No. 6 of the seven heads is reigning contemporary with the time that the beast “*is not*”—is out of action. The proof that the time viewpoint must be the same in both verses is seen in the fact that the two explanations are given by the same angel in the same explanation of the very same symbols. Also both verses use all three tenses—past, present, and future. But as we shall see later, this paradox is easily resolved when we get the correct point of history from which the vision is presented to the apostle.

Additional proof that the time viewpoint of this chapter is the last period of human history is found in the last part of the chapter—the ten kings come to one mind and agree to give their royal power to the beast. Ellen G. White definitely applies this to the confederacy of the last hours of time, when the dragon, the beast, and the false prophet all unite against the King of kings and Lord of lords in the final crisis of human history. (See *Manuscript 24*, 1891). This will be explained later. This gives us a consistent and eminently reasonable interpretation of the entire seventeenth chapter of Revelation. The chapter as a whole belongs exactly where we find it, as related to the parts before and after. Its setting is the last of the last days, the last part of the time of the end. And the climax of the chapter deals with the climax of human history, when all the powers of earth reverse the policy of fragmentation and separation spoken of in the vision of Daniel 2, where it was foretold that the divisions of the Roman Empire would not cleave to one another, even as iron is not mixed with clay.

But in the final hours of time this fragmentation policy, initiated at Babel by God as a protection of His people and a partial blocking of Satan’s plans, becomes reversed; and for one brief prophetic hour “the restraint which has been upon the wicked is removed, and Satan has entire control of the finally impenitent.”—*The Great Controversy*, p. 614. They all “have one mind” and agree to unite against God and the people of God. “These shall make war with the Lamb, and the Lamb shall overcome them: for he is Lord of lords, and King of kings.” Revelation 17:14.

## THE SEVEN HEADS

We have already seen that some prophetic symbols may be understood in two different ways, viewed from different angles. The dragon primarily represents Satan, but in a secondary sense it means imperial Rome, or pagan Rome, which was the ruling world power when the visions of the Revelation were given. The same principle of a twofold meaning will be helpful in understanding the symbol of the seven heads mentioned several times in the prophecies of Daniel and the Revelation. The number seven usually indicates completeness or finality; and as the seven heads are said to be successive in Revelation 17:9, 10, they evidently represent all the various successive nations through which Satan has tried more or less successfully to control national affairs to oppose or hinder the work of God. In other words, the seven heads would mean all the oppressive, tyrannical civil governments during all human history from the days of Nimrod to the very end of time.

This would be the larger view of the subject, what theologians call the apotelesmatic meaning of the prophecy, *sub specie aeternitatis*—the way the heavenly intelligences see it. But there must also be a proleptic view, one which would apply to seven specific cases. The statement, "Five are fallen, and one is, and the other is not yet come" (verse 10), obviously indicates seven specific world powers in a series. Hence we need to study with much care to see what successive nations are meant. Until recently the seventeenth chapter of Revelation was the most mysterious of all this book, if not of the entire Bible. Our pioneer prophetic expositor, Uriah Smith, had very little to say about it. Protestants realized that in a general way this chapter depicts the unholy alliance of church and state—that general meaning is as plain as A B C. But its numbers and other details have been a complete enigma for even Seventh-day Adventists. Even the last part of the chapter, about the ten kings coming to one mind and agreeing to give their power to the beast, has been misunderstood as referring to the Middle Ages, in spite of the plain statement of Ellen G. White assigning this to the confederacy of the very last hours of time, which is its obvious meaning.

But the reason for this continuous misunderstanding may not be so obscure. Perchance the time was not ripe for it to be understood. This chapter is intimately connected with the Loud Cry of Revelation 18:4, "Come out of her, my people"; and like much of the Book of Daniel that was closed up and sealed till the time of the end, this chapter 17 may not have been designed by divine Providence to be understood until this message of the Loud Cry would be ready for proclamation to the world. But that message is now due. The ban would therefore have been lifted, and every detail of this chapter made plain.

For many centuries the Catholic Church has had her own interpretation of this chapter, as will be found in her notes in her Douay Bible. Her theologians, followed closely by the Modernistic critics, have always assumed that the time viewpoint from which the angel's explanation was given to John was the time of the Roman emperors. Accordingly they have always thought they had to bring in Egypt and Assyria to lead off the list of Babylon, Medo-Persia, and Greece, in order to have five "kings," or empires, which at that time had "fallen," as stated in verse 10. Pagan, or imperial, Rome was then reigning, and would be No. 6 of the series. Of course the next one, No. 7, which at that time had not yet come, would be the horrible antichrist. This was also the teaching of the early church fathers.

A number of years ago, before the paradoxical language of this chapter was well understood, even some Adventist writers were deceived by this part of the wine of Babylon. They adopted this Catholic interpretation of this most vital of all the prophecies, probably because they thought they had a clear case for making No. 7 of this series a symbol of the great antichrist. They overlooked the fact that Egypt and Assyria are never once referred to in any

of the serial prophecies of Daniel. They also forgot the well-known historical fact that the Babylon of Nebuchadnezzar and Daniel is often called the Neo-Babylonian empire, or the second Babylonian empire; because the first career of Babylon antedated both Egypt and Assyria, going back to the time of Nimrod, soon after the Flood.

As we shall see in later chapters, the religious factor is vastly more important to the conflict of the ages than is the political, and it is always more the concern of Bible prophecy. This was the case in ancient times. Neither Egypt nor Assyria, though cruel and oppressive, ever exerted anything like the bewitching, seductive, and deceptive influence which, during all the centuries from Nimrod to Belshazzar and long after, the cults and priesthoods centered in "holy" Babylon exercised over the surrounding nations. A. H. Sayce tells us that from the days of Hammurabi's empire onward Babylon "continued to be the capital of Babylonia and the holy city of Western Asia."—*Encyclopaedia Britannica*, Eleventh ed., Vol. III, p. 98. In fact, both Egypt and Assyria were relatively insignificant in their religious and cultural influence on the rest of the world.

The advocates of Egypt and Assyria disregarded the plain statement of the prophecy that No. 7 of the series would have only a very brief career—"and when he cometh, he must continue a short space" (verse 10), or "must remain only a little while" (R.S.V. ), or "his stay must be brief" (Goodspeed).\* \*Smith and Goodspeed, *The Complete Bible: An American Translation*. Used by permission of the University of Chicago Press.

But everybody knows that the Catholic Church has lasted almost as long as all the others put together. These are serious objections and indicate that this cannot be the correct interpretation. The true view will not involve any denial of facts. We need a sensible, self-consistent interpretation of this chapter, so that we can give intelligently the last gospel message, "Come out of her, my people." Revelation 18:4.

The red dragon of chapter 12, the leopard beast of chapter 13, and the scarlet beast of chapter 17 are all described as having seven heads. We must find a meaning that will fit them all. This we may do if we look upon the series as beginning with the Babylon of Nimrod, and as representing successively the more or less successful attempts of Satan to assume control of mankind and compel them to do his bidding, in opposition to the work of God and the people of God. The first and the second Babylonian empires should be regarded as a unit. Then Babylon, Medo-Persia, Greece, and imperial Rome would make the first four, as in all the prophecies of Daniel; Papal Rome thus becomes the fifth of the series, receiving its deadly wound, or death stroke, in 1798. These are the five that "are fallen" at the time spoken of by the angel in verse 10. And the period since then, "the time of the end," which has already lasted a century and a half and may last we know not how much longer, is obviously the point regarded as the present in this prophecy, the point from which the interpretation is given by the angel. At this period, says the angel, the satanic beast of intolerance "was, and is not" (verse 8), meaning the same as the period of the deadly wound; yet the angel immediately goes on to state that one of the heads "is" (verse 10), or "is reigning" (Goodspeed). This must be No. 6 of the series. In other words, No. 6 must be in existence or be reigning during our day, from 1798 onward. This much seems to be certain. Accordingly, we need to look around in our modern world in order to identify, if possible, the world power meant by this profoundly important prophecy.

Two candidates have been suggested. The two-horned beast, or false prophet, in all probability must have a place somewhere in this series of world powers. In the thirteenth chapter it follows next in succession after the infliction of the deadly wound upon the leopard beast. But it was very youthful and lamblike in 1798. At that time it could not possibly be looked upon as a dominant world power. In several other prophecies mention is made beforehand of a power in anticipation of what it would later become; such seems to be the case here. It can well be argued that this two-horned beast does not qualify as one of the

heads in this series until it begins to speak like a dragon, for all the heads are pictured as antagonistic to God and His truth; but in its lamblike early stage it is kindly and harmless.

I am writing for those already familiar with these subjects. Everyone familiar with the prophecies of Daniel and the Revelation knows that, in any extended series, the next one following is always pictured as the *cause* of the downfall of its predecessor. Accordingly, in the case before us, we need to consider what it was that caused the deadly wound in 1798, and perhaps also still keeps this deadly wound from healing. It was not the historic monarchy of France, the eldest son of the Church, which brought about the downfall of the Papacy in 1798. It was what *The Great Controversy*, page 269, calls "a new manifestation of satanic power," what Revelation calls the beast from the bottomless pit, or the abyss. The Directory is the name given to the group of five men who ruled from 1795 to 1799; it was they who sent Berthier to take the pope prisoner and bring him to France. And it was the fanatical, organized atheism which they represented that brought about the overthrow of every Catholic government throughout the world at that time or soon afterward. In our day it is *this same beast from the bottomless pit*, outwardly toned down and more polite and showing less outward fanaticism, that still keeps the deadly wound from being healed.

Please do not misunderstand me. The complete separation of church and state is a wise, good policy. Civil and religious liberty are both good. But the French Revolutionists stole these heavenly ideas from the Americans of a previous generation, and used them to camouflage their propaganda of anti-God and anti-Bible which spread so universally at that time. And the Biblical higher criticism, or the liberalism of our day, the evolution philosophy, or the modern anti-Genesis apostasy now so universal throughout the Occidental world, are just the same manifestation of satanic power, though in the style of the twentieth century. It was new in 1798, but today we have grown so accustomed to it that we take it for granted.

And this, in my opinion, is what is meant by No. 6 of the seven heads. Without doubt this is what brought about the deadly wound in 1798. At that time it could correctly be described as a new manifestation of satanic power, for nothing like it had been known before in the history of the nations. But from that day to this, under various changes and disguises, it has become the dominant intellectual power throughout the Occidental world. It is this anti-Genesis apostasy which still keeps the deadly wound from being healed, which indicates that it is the prophetic successor of No. 5 of the series of the seven heads, and hence must qualify as No. 6. But what about the two-horned beast, or false prophet, which we Adventists for a hundred years have been teaching means the United States, making it No. 7 of the series? The prophecy describes it as having "two horns like a lamb," which *The Great Controversy* says "fitly" represents the character of this country in its early days, "when presented to the prophet as 'coming up' in 1798." (P. 441). Certainly this character of gentleness and harmlessness is still a truthful characterization of America in the matter of civil and religious liberty. This would seem to indicate that at this stage of its career America cannot qualify as one of the seven heads, for they all are the opponents of God and the people of God.

Yet after this first statement about having two horns like a lamb, every single statement about this two-horned beast is bad, terribly bad. It is pictured as a clever but tricky deceiver, the most accomplished and dangerous deceiver of all human history. At the climax of its evil career it will speak "as a dragon"; but the detailed charge against it gives a list of some of the spectacular deceptions with which it induces the people into making an image to the leopard beast (No. 5 of the series), and then gets everybody to pay homage to this first beast, in this way bringing it back to life again—healing its deadly wound. This, of course, is in effect bringing the beast of intolerance, or religious persecution, back from the bottomless pit, the state of death, as foretold in Revelation 17:8. When God deals with the situation, this two-horned beast is "cast alive" into the first lake of fire at the second coming of Christ.

This astonishing transformation in character and conduct from the lamblike horns to the dragon voice will be considered later. Here we are merely concerned with correctly understanding and identifying the series of the seven heads. A recent translation of Revelation 17:11 clears up some features of the problem. "The beast which was and is no more is an eighth by count, though actually one of the seven previous to him—he it is that goes away to destruction."—John Wick Bowman, *The Drama of the Book of Revelation*, p. 114. This makes it clear that the rejuvenated Papacy would be No. 8 of the series, and strongly suggests that the image of the beast (the dragon phase of the two-horned beast) must be No. 7, with the anti-Genesis apostasy of our time as No. 6. This does not rule out the possibility that the personal appearance of Satan impersonating Christ may be what is meant by No. 8 of this series. From this brief sketch it is clear that the prophecies of Daniel and the Revelation consistently use various kinds of ravenous beasts as symbols of human organizations which work against God and His people. In the early days, when God had a political group or nation as His representative on earth, the beasts opposing it were also nations. But God and all the inhabitants of heaven are always more interested in the spread of ideas or doctrines than in the shifting of national or political boundaries. Therefore in the course of centuries, when God's work became international in extent, Satan's organized opposition also became more universal. Hence the symbolic beasts which represent Satan's work during our day, the time of the end, must necessarily represent more universal or ideological influences, rather than mere national or political groups. We can see this on a worldwide basis today.

Primarily, of course, it is always the devil himself in the form of his human puppets that is being shown in all these prophetic symbols. These symbolic animals are given as kindergarten pieces for our instruction. And we need to remember this twofold meaning which is usually behind them, for most of them are easily capable of a double application. We can apply them wherever they fit; and wherever they fit, they were meant to apply. We have been told, "While the dragon, primarily, represents Satan, it is, in a secondary sense, a symbol of pagan Rome."—*The Great Controversy*, p. 438. The on-looking heavenly angels realize that the great rebel is being portrayed in all these symbols; but we here on earth understand them as representing the human organizations through which Satan carries on his work. Just three symbols together comprise all the work of the evil one during the last hours of time. The dragon, the leopard beast, and the two-horned beast, or false prophet, are spoken of in Revelation 16:13, 14 as representing all the powers of humanity which band together against God and His people at the very last. Hence it seems fair to conclude (Apostate Protestantism) that these three symbols should in their widest meanings be understood as representing three global ideologies which in these last days control the thinking and acting of great masses of mankind. For instance, we might think of the dragon as symbolic of organized infidelity, such as Marxian communism. The leopard beast would represent Roman Catholicism in its universal aspects, which is certainly not a nation in any proper sense of the term, but a global religion, equally as effective in New Zealand or America as in Italy. Similarly, the false prophet is not confined to the United States. It represents the modernistic aspects of apostate Protestantism, which has been termed the Americanization of religion; but it may be seen in Australia or South Africa or Germany as well as in North America.

All this emphasizes that national boundary lines count little in these days. These three apostate powers blend and intermingle with each other. But together the divine prophecies use them to represent all the powers of earth which in the last remnant of the time of the end combine to war against God and His church, the latter also being scattered all around the globe. We need to remember that the serial prophecies of Daniel present the dominant nations which successively ruled the people of God after Israel and Judah had apostatized and lost their independence. This line of dominant nations represents the temporarily successful attempts of Satan to shape human affairs according to his will. The three leading symbols of the Revelation—the dragon, the leopard beast, and the woman-ridden scarlet beast—

all recapitulate what had already been given by Daniel, but enlarge on the conditions which are to prevail in the very last days. The seven successive stages of Satan's partial control of the world are symbolized by the seven heads, which appear on all three of the beasts just mentioned, as given in Revelation 12, 13, and 17. All three of these symbolic beasts repeat briefly the previous history, but concentrate on the events of the last days of time.

Lastly, these symbolic beasts are all pictured in antithetical contrast to the innocent, harmless, nondefensive lamb, which throughout the entire Bible is used as a symbol of the methods and character of Christ and His style of organization. The glorious chorus at the end of chapter 5 of the Revelation, given by the literary figure of prolepsis (anticipation), is a splendid picture of the final complete victory of the Lamb of God over all opposition and all the deceptions of the enemy.

4

## TWO HORNS LIKE A LAMB

There is always a perplexity on reading *The Great Controversy*, page 441 (edition of 1888), the interpretation of the "two horns like a lamb" (Revelation 13:11) as referring to the principles of civil and religious liberty. "Republicanism and Protestantism" are also given as an equivalent expression. Here abstract ideas are brought into the prophetic picture instead of the concrete meanings of the horns mentioned in the other prophecies bearing in mind that in the Book of Daniel horns represented nations. Did not the ram with two horns symbolize the dual monarchy of Medo-Persia? (Daniel 8:20). And did not the great horn on the rough goat mean the first king of Greece? (Verse 21). Also the ten horns on the fourth beast of Daniel 7 have always been interpreted as meaning the many kingdoms of western Europe into which the empire of Rome was divided, these same ten horns reappearing on each of the three symbols in the Revelation which deal with these subjects, chapters 12, 13, and 17. The meaning in all these instances seemed very plain. How then could the two horns like a lamb represent civil and religious liberty?

The perplexity cannot be answered but only in the discovery of a profound principle that characterizes all the long lines of prophecy. They all begin with small, concrete political organizations around the eastern end of the Mediterranean, which are easily identified and in fact are employed for purposes of identification to put us on the right track. But they all end up the same way—by showing us a universal conflict between good and evil on an absolutely global scale, with such high abstractions as the beast and the false prophet, their activities and their partisans represented as found in every nation, and kindred, and tongue, and people.

All this is because the organized work of God in the early days was extremely localized; it was outwardly on a small scale and confined to what we term the Bible lands, or the Middle East. Similarly the organized satanic opposition to God's work was also localized and could easily be represented by individual nations. But in our day the work of God is global in extent, and the opposition to it is also universal; furthermore, the two opposing forces are today grouped around far more subtle and abstract ideas than ever before in the history of mankind. It was difficult or impossible for some of the early Jewish Christians in the days of Paul and Peter to comprehend that the gospel was to go to all the world. Similarly, it is difficult for some modern Christians to grasp the idea that the prophecies dealing with our days must be global in all their applications. But narrow Jewish exclusiveness had to be outgrown in the first century, and every form of narrow nationalism must be discarded now if we are to understand the prophecies relating to the last days.

There is nothing strange or inconsistent in the Bible's use of horns to represent kingdoms in the times of Alexander and its use of the same symbolism in our day to represent the chief ideologies in the foundation of the United States. *The Great Controversy* explains, "These principles are the secret of its power and prosperity."—p. 441. The dictionary definition of a horn, as used in the Bible, is that it is a symbol of strength, pride, or glory. In this modern age of universal abstract principles both good and bad, it is highly appropriate that freedom of thought and of conscience, the liberty to order our lives as we like, should be chosen by Divine Inspiration to characterize that giant power rising out of the earth in the West just as the leopard beast was going into captivity, receiving its deadly wound, at the close of the eighteenth century. But why is this seemingly gentle and harmless creature branded as a "false prophet"? And why are we given in verse after verse a detailed description of the clever deceptions he uses to befuddle the last and best-educated generation of mankind? The symbol in its largest meaning represents *our entire Occidental civilization*, with America as its exemplar.

Briefly, the reason is that while God is restraining tyranny and persecution in this time-of-the-end period, granting freedom for His church to preach the gospel of the coming kingdom, the evil one employs this false prophet to use these two freedoms to teach instead visions of world progress and continuous human development, promising that we shall soon outgrow war and the other pains and evils of life by mere human wisdom and planning. This is a false gospel, promising what God alone can do and contrary to what He has foretold in the Bible. In effect it is like the work of the false disciples of old who tried to take Jesus by force to make Him king (John 6:15), the kind of king they wanted. All utopian or messianic planning for the world's future through human organizations are foredoomed to utter failure and are in reality a defiance of God's plans. "Every plant, which my heavenly Father hath not planted, shall, be rooted up." Matthew 15:13. Shortly before He went away, Jesus declared, "My kingdom is not of this world." John 18:36. Accordingly, every attempt to set up a utopian religious kingdom here in this world or to establish universal peace on earth while the King Himself is still absent must necessarily be an imitation, a counterfeit—that is, a mere puppet kingdom of the devil, run by the devil and run in the interests of the devil's work. All religious governments of the past, except the theocracy of ancient Israel, have been counterfeits, mere imitations of Christ's kingdom; and it will not fare well for those who engage in such a false theocracy when the real King Himself returnsto take possession ofHis purchased possession, so long alienated and in the hands of His inveterate enemy.

Few people of our day realize the tremendous impact made upon the thinking and life of the world by the events connected with the French Revolution and the gaining of American independence. It has been remarked that the people of Europe and America are divisible into two classes: those who regret that the French Revolution ever started and those who are sorry it ever stopped. The former, the minority, mourn over what might have been; the latter, the majority, hope for what may yet be. The mind and life of the modern world have been recast completely because of the intellectual and social forces which were let loose about two centuries ago.

Everybody admits that these two horns, civil and religious freedom, are good and harmless as abstract principles. All want to enjoy them for themselves. But there is no denying that they were used as decoys by the French Revolutionists to promote cruel enactments of tyranny and terror. And they are still being used in this false way today in many parts of the world. We have been told that from our day onward the entire world is going to pass seriatim through the successive stages of folly and horror that Paris went through on a small scale in a few short years. In other words, *France gave us a brief preview of what the entire world is now going through or will go through until the dragon's voice is heard in all its horror.* Ellen G. White wrote, "The same teachings that led to the French Revolution ... are tending to involve the whole world in a struggle similar to that which convulsed France."—*Education*, p. 228.

Several passages in the Bible, when put in relationship with one another, tell the same story. This comparison between the history of the Red Terror and our own times is no fancied analogy, but a solemn, awful fact, foretold by divine prophecy for our warning and instruction. "None of the wicked shall understand; but the wise shall understand." Daniel 12: 10. In reality the two-horned beast, in its entire career, runs contemporary with the power symbolized in Revelation 11:7 by the beast from the bottomless pit which made deadly war upon the Bible at the time of the French Revolution and has reappeared several times since. We have named it organized atheism, infidelity on a national scale. It reappeared briefly in most of Europe in 1848; then it gained Russia in 1917. In a slightly camouflaged disguise it showed itself in Germany in 1933, where it held out for about a dozen years. More recently it has taken over the rule of China, from which it is reaching out to overrun more of the Orient. Many do not realize that the scientific philosophy of evolution is merely a more polite and disguised form of the same power, which we have named the modern anti-

Genesis apostasy and have listed it as No. 6 of the series of the seven heads. It has not yet taken over the government of America and the other Occidental countries, and perhaps will be stymied from doing this in a formal way by some upsurge of the power of Babylon the Great. But there can be no question that these atheistic elements have used these two principles of civil and religious liberty to their own advantage. The Jacobins of Paris first stole these two heavenly principles from the young American republic; but ever since, their followers have used them as slogans for propaganda purposes, to enforce doctrines and customs belonging to the prince of darkness.

As already stated, on several occasions and in a limited way this anti-God campaign has been visibly successful, and by camouflage and infiltration the doctrines and manner of life of the beast from the bottomless pit have already gained control of essentially the entire Occidental world. By the teaching of the radical criticism in the theological seminaries and from the editorial rooms, and by the false science in all the schools from the elementary grades to the university, the thinking habits of the entire world have changed within modern memory. Hence the Protestantism of America has already become in reality the anti-Genesis apostasy. This Protestantism and great Babylon together comprise essentially the entire world. Hence God's clarion call is now due: "Come out of her, my people." Revelation 18:4. Some of the changes in social and political affairs may be worth considering. In a review of what he termed an "almost terrifying book," the editor of *The Christian Century* (June 22, 1955, p. 732) discussed Waiter Lippmann's *The Public Philosophy*. He quoted Lippmann as pointing out how completely and universally constitutional governments prove themselves incapable of conducting a successful foreign policy.

This failure is not due to a lack of power but to a lack of sound statesmanship. Statesmanship is lacking because the executive has lost control of policy to an uninformed mass of voters who are, in Lippmann's words, dupes of "party bosses, the agents of pressure groups, and the magnates of the new media of mass communications." The threatening breakdown of modern democratic processes Lippmann described as follows: "With exceptions so rare that they are regarded as miracles and freaks of nature, successful democratic politicians are insecure and intimidated men. They advance politically only as they placate, appease, bribe, seduce, bamboozle or otherwise manage to manipulate the demanding and threatening elements in their constituencies. The decisive consideration is not whether the proposition is good but whether it is popular.... The people have acquired power which they are incapable of exercising, and the governments they elect have lost powers which they must recover if they are to govern." The reason this editor found Lippmann's book "an almost terrifying book" is because the book's analysis of the situation in this and other democracies "is so convincing."

The two horns like a lamb gave many beguiling promises a century and a half ago, at the beginning of this time of the end. Human nature, it was said, is inherently good; therefore when the evil restrictions and hindrances are removed by these two freedoms, civil and religious, humanity must inevitably progress, and soon will outgrow all the evils of society. But such dreams are based on ignorance of some of the most securely established of all lessons of history. We need go no further back than the times of the Tudors and the Stuarts to learn that the teachings of the Bible are the most stabilizing and uplifting of all the social and educative influences known to humanity. The sad condition of all those countries which have not had the Bible serves to warn Europe and America not to forget and abandon the true source of prosperity and greatness.

The late John Dewey, the apostle of pragmatic modernism, when brought face to face with the raw heathenism of China, expressed surprise at what he saw. He had always taken it for granted that the common decencies of life are the normal and ubiquitous reactions of all human beings under certain circumstances. The by-products of his Puritan ancestry had accustomed him so to expect. But he had falsely attributed these good results to human

development, the outgrowing of evil tendencies by evolution, instead of their being the mere by-products of Christian ethical teaching. T. H. Huxley was nearer the true facts of life when he declared, "Right practice is the outcome of right theory." Nearly a century ago the true facts were well expressed: "Christian life without Christian doctrine has never yet appeared. Those who claim to show it in Christian lands are simply cuckoos in nests of Christian doctrine which they built not, but whose warm environment makes them what they are." The radical criticism, as applied to religious history and literature, Lyellism in geology, and Darwinism in biology and anthropology, together with totalitarian socialism, had started before my time but had not received any widespread acceptance. But now we see their fruits. Two full generations have come and gone, and the people of today cannot fully realize what a different world is theirs. Having grown up in an atmosphere of modernistic paganism, how can they realize that other ideas ever prevailed?

For more than two generations, reverence for the Bible's record of origins and the basic ideas of Christianity founded on these origins have been persistently and systematically undermined in elementary school, high school, and university, and now in all the modern media of publicity and communication. Thus even the indirect knowledge of the Bible has lost its cultural and uplifting influence, and the masses in America and Europe are as truly religious illiterates as the pagans of imperial Rome or the superstitious fanatics of the Middle Ages. Horace Greeley once said, "It is impossible mentally or socially to enslave a Bible-reading people. The principles of the Bible are the groundwork of human freedom." But with the Bible repudiated or unknown, what protection has the modern world against idiotic superstitions, mass hysteria, and civil and religious tyranny? The French Revolution, which our world is repeating *seriatim*, shows that there is no protection under such circumstances.

As dangers domestic and international multiply and cannot be handled as before, a greatly strengthened statism dominated by a heathenized church calling itself Christian becomes the logical outgrowth of the present situation of apostasy. Its coming is only a question of time, and its terrifying power when established can be estimated by the ignorance of Bible principles everywhere prevailing and by the facilities now at hand for arousing to frenzy the mass hysteria of multiplied millions almost overnight. A paternal statism on a virtually international scale and its ecclesiastical paramour, an ecumenical church demanding universal acceptance—what a fearsome combination against those conscientious remnants of the woman's seed, looking in vain for a place to hide as the dragon sets out to war against them! The very suggestion that their descendants might yet be obliged to live under such a regime would have brought an indignant retort from the lips of Jefferson and Washington, of Milton and Hampden, and of the other heroes of Anglo-Saxon freedom. Yet, according to the infallible prophecies of Revelation 13:11-17 and many related scriptures, such a state of world affairs is just ahead. And the watchful student of world conditions can discern all too many forecasts of the coming storm.

The *therion* (beast) from the land, with two horns like a lamb, turns out to be a deceiver and a false prophet, for he speaks "as a dragon." (Revelation 13:11). Its two horns, at first civil and religious liberty, are becoming transformed before our eyes into instruments of cruelty and oppression. These twin fiends, civil and religious despotism, born of the unholy alliance of ignorance and superstition, cradled and fed by that theophobia and hatred of all things divine which is natural to unredeemed men, have dogged the footsteps of the true church all down the weary centuries. They have marked the trail with the blood of the noblest and best of her children and are again leering with cruel eyes after the remnant church as she hurries for the last time into the wilderness, as foretold in Revelation 12:17, to wait and pray for final deliverance at the coming of her long-looked-for Saviour.

The morning of the prophetic time of the end dawned brightly on the buoyant hopes of man. This young *therion* with the two lamblike horns would surely soon cure all the ills and evils of human society. But the riches and material prosperity resulting from the two freedoms brought forgetfulness of the true Source of all wisdom and blessing. Then two world wars and the gathering clouds of number three brought disillusionment and panic. And now, in the unreasoning frenzy of mass hysteria, the nations are in a mood to obey any false messiah who promises relief from tension and fear. The sad truth is that human nature is just as cruel and wicked today as ever in the past. A few are willing to be saved; the race will never be. Its wound is incurable. Today, with unprecedented opportunities and blessings, it is doing exactly as unregenerate men have always done during all the centuries—building and decorating the tombs of the martyrs of the past, but lighting the fagot for the unpopular heroes of the present. “To human wisdom, all this now seems impossible; but as the restraining Spirit of God shall be withdrawn from men, and they shall be under the control of Satan, who hates the divine precepts, there will be strange developments. The heart can be very cruel when God’s fear and love are removed.”—*The Great Controversy*, p. 608.

5

## THE DEADLY WOUND

One of the most outstanding facts about the period in human history named in prophecy as the time of the end is that it parallels another prophetic period called the time when the leopard beast suffers from a deadly wound, called by the Revised Standard Version "a mortal wound." (Revelation 13:3). The nature and importance of this period for the work of the gospel deserve our careful study, for hitherto the subject has not been well understood.

Moffatt's Translation of this passage reads, "One of his heads looked as if it had been slain and killed." Since the seven heads are successive, and we have already learned that the fifth of the series is the one here mentioned, this head was all of the beast then existing; therefore when this head received its deadly wound, it was the beast itself that was put out of action. In other words, the head and the beast are here synonymous. A headless beast would be powerless. The literal of the Greek is very expressive and seems even stronger than any of the translations would indicate. It means that the creature looked as if it had had "its throat cut to death." It is the same phrase that is used in chapter 5, verse 6, about the Lamb—"as if it had been slain," being thus made ready for sacrifice. But in the passage we are here considering it is added that this had been done "to death." It must have been with intelligent purpose that Inspiration here uses the very same expression about the beast that it had previously used about Christ under the symbol of a lamb. And then the text records the astonishing recovery of the beast: "And his deadly wound was healed; and all the world wondered after the beast" (Revelation 13:3), or "went after him in wonder," as Moffatt puts it. In Revelation 17:8 we have a similar statement of the astonishment of the people of the entire world at the unexpected recovery of the beast. In both texts the people express their wonder in language that implies that this recovery is similar to a resurrection, proving, as they think, that this recovered beast must be divine. The entire incident seems to be treated as a sort of blasphemous imitation of the death and resurrection of Jesus.

The deadly wound and its healing make clear that the system of anti-Christianity represented by the leopard beast was to exercise its despotic, persecuting power during two distinct periods of time. The first would be long—1260 years. The second will be short—"when he cometh, he must continue a short space." (Revelation 17:10). These two periods of beastly dominance (persecution) are separated by a period of inaction, called "captivity" in Revelation 13:10—the period of the deadly wound. As already stated, this period parallels what is called in the Book of Daniel "the time of the end." It is also, to a special degree, the period during which the earth helps the woman and swallows up the flood of persecution that the dragon casts out of his mouth (Revelation 12: 16), during which time the beast of persecution "is not" (Revelation 17:8).

The important feature of this period of the deadly wound, the time of the end, is its religious liberty, i.e., its absence of persecution. So far as precise dates go, it began with the close of the 1260 years in 1798, which is also the date when the pope was taken prisoner by the French armies. But the causes of the deadly wound and of the present period when it is kept from being healed, lie deeper than this very temporary end of papal rule, for several times previously a pope had been defeated or made prisoner, without any such world conditions as we see prevailing today. Persecution on any general scale ended "a quarter of a century earlier" than 1798 (*The Great Controversy*, p. 306), which corresponds with the rise of the United States. And it is well worth while for us to consider just what has happened to produce the present order of things, which has now lasted for nearly two centuries. It is plain that the cause of the modern stoppage of persecution is much deeper than the capture of the then-reigning head of the Catholic Church by orders of the French Directory, for it was only a few years more until Napoleon was signing a concordat with another pope. With

several more ups and downs in 1848 and in 1870, the pope was made a nominal king again in 1929; and yet the deadly wound obviously is not healed. If it were, how could Seventh-day Adventist sermons be broadcast in Italian by radio throughout the homeland of the Papacy and Adventist literature be sold openly within the shadow of the Vatican? No, the deadly wound is still unhealed. Just what has happened?

But don't misunderstand me. The wound was inflicted by the French armies in 1798. "At that time [1798], the pope was made captive by the French army, the papal power received its deadly wound, and the prediction was fulfilled, 'He that leadeth into captivity shall go into captivity.' "—*The Great Controversy*, p. 439. This is the *primary*, or *local*, meaning of the prophecy.

There is no question that this event marked the beginning of the deadly wound. But in reality what was then happening was vastly more than the defeat and capture of Pius VI. As has been stated, on more than one previous occasion the then-reigning pope was defeated or driven into exile. But around the turn from the eighteenth to the nineteenth century, the Catholic cause was everywhere subjected to humiliation and repression. One historian tells that every Roman Catholic government in the world experienced a revolution. Never since has the old power of dealing with "heretics" been permitted on anything like a general scale. Just what was then taking place, and what causes brought about the change in the intellectual and cultural thinking of the whole civilized world? The beast from the abyss is not a nation; it is an ideology, international in extent. Even the modern Catholic Church, though exemplified by the Vatican in Rome, is not limited by any national boundaries; it is an ideology that pervades the entire world. The work of God is global, and the opposition to it is also worldwide. Thus the change which came over the world a century and a half ago was a fundamental change of ideas. France was the concrete agent which initiated the change; but it was the ideology then dominating the Directory, the ruling power in Paris, which was behind the change. This fact calls for emphasis and explanation.

The five men composing the Directory, the government of France from 1795 to 1799, were in spirit only a second edition of the Jacobins of the Red Terror a few years before. They were starry-eyed, utopian fanatics, obsessed with what they thought was science and progress, and hypnotized with the resolve to impose the Revolution and all it stood for on all the surrounding countries of Europe. Since they did not like the lenient way that their general, young Bonaparte, was dealing with the pope and the Church of Rome, they sent Berthier down to Italy with specific orders of what to do. This was why the sick, aged pontiff was seized with studied disrespect and brought as a prisoner to France. One of the cardinal ideas of the Revolution which these leaders of France were determined to spread by force to the rest of the world was the complete separation of church and state. They were constantly prating about civil and religious liberty, the same two lamblike ideas which had been incorporated into the American Constitution a quarter of a century previously. Right here we need to keep our chronology straight.

Many otherwise well-informed people seem to think that the atheistic French Revolution came first and that the American Revolution came afterward and copied from the French, whereas it was just the other way around. Lafayette, who afterward became one of the leaders in France, had come to America as a young man, where he acted as assistant to Washington. After returning to his native country, he tried to put into effect the ideas and methods which he had seen established so successfully across the Atlantic. Berthier had also come to America as a young man and served for a while under Washington. But tyranny and religious bigotry had prevailed so long in France that when the Revolution once started, it soon got out of hand—and then a thousand moderates like Lafayette could not stem the awful torrent of destruction and ruin.

We need to remember that what happened in France was permitted by a merciful Providence as a warning, a horrible example, a preliminary rehearsal on a small scale, of what the entire world is rapidly coming to in the near future. "The same teachings that led to the French Revolution ... are tending to involve the whole world in a struggle similar to that which convulsed France."—*Education*, p, 228. Of course it is unthinkable that the evil one deliberately planned to have intolerance and religious persecution stopped by what his puppets were doing. But the wise and merciful Manager of the universe overruled in this case, as in countless others, to bring about affairs according to His will. Assyria was used as a rod for the accomplishing of God's purpose. "Howbeit he [Assyria] meaneth not so" (Isaiah 10: 7), for those cruel, headstrong people thought they were just having their own way. God similarly used the French revolutionists in the capture of the pope and in all the other events of that time to bring about the modern age of freedom and liberty, symbolized in the prophecy as the deadly wound, the death stroke. And these providences of God are still effective in keeping this wound from being healed.

From the beginning of Luther's work the question of the proper relationship between the state and the church had been discussed. But while Luther himself at first wished to keep the church free from any entangling alliances with the civil government, not one of the post-Reformation churches followed this principle. Without exception they all kept drinking the wine of Babylon by all accepting subsidies from the state and by keeping up with varying degrees of intimacy the same old union with the civil power which had been maintained since the days of Constantine. But the farseeing plans of divine Providence were making provision for a new style of civil government, one that would not be oppressive of any form of religion, yet would not try with unholy hands to steady the sacred ark when apparently in danger of collapse. Long ago God had tried the plan of a genuine theocracy, under the direct rulership of men of His own appointment, a plan that lasted several centuries among the Israelites. It was a dismal failure--not on God's part, but on that of the people. This plan was discontinued after the solemn warning was given that this divinely appointed rulership would be overturned, overturned, overturned, and would then "be no more, until he come whose right it is; and I will give it him." (Ezekiel 21:27). But the Head of the church had still another plan, partly as the outgrowth of the principles of the Reformation, but chiefly as a special providential preparation for the development of a perfect and complete church to meet Him as a pure bride at His second coming. He planned to show the world and the onlooking universe an example of a civil government that would protect the soul liberty of its citizens, yet would keep from meddling with religious affairs in any way, teaching its people to render to Caesar the things that are Caesar's and to God the things that are God's.

These two freedoms, civil and religious, seemed to originate with this young republic of the West. Humanly speaking, this is true. But these principles are of heavenly, not human, origin. And from the West they have spread abroad until essentially all the peoples of earth profess acceptance of them. These ideas, without possible contradiction, are the real cause of the deadly wound, and the continuing cause of its still remaining unhealed. But what would be the natural results of these two freedoms? From its beginning this new world power has been successful and prosperous. So spectacular have been its achievements that large parts of the world have tried to imitate its example in the two basic ideas of democratic processes and liberty of conscience. Thus the deadly wound has been extended and kept from healing. For almost two centuries persecution for religion has practically ceased throughout the civilized world, largely because of the example and influence of what we may call the dream of Protestant America.

Plainly it is not Protestantism alone, for neither in Germany nor in Scandinavia nor in England was this style of civil government developed. But in the New World, with the prejudices and hampering habits of centuries left behind, the two basic principles of civil and religious liberty, characteristic of true Christianity, could develop and mature. By their glorious fruitage and contagious influence they have for nearly two centuries prevented the

deadly wound from being healed. "Puritanism," said James Russell Lowell, believed itself to be pregnant with the seed of religious liberty, but "laid without knowing it the egg of democracy." The two ideas when united have proved the most dynamic in spectacular achievement that have ever shaped the national history of any people. Lowell goes on to say that when, in addition, education was made universal and in a sense compulsory, the American dream became a reality.

This American dream may seem abstract and intangible, but its world influence has been and still is profound. Nothing is more real and invincible than a prophetically predicted idea whose time has come. On first thought it seems inconsistent to say that the beast from the abyss, in the person of the French Directory, gave the deadly wound in 1798, yet that it is the kindly, tolerant spirit of the modern intellectual world climate that now prevents a return to the religious bigotry and persecution of the past, that still keeps this wound from being healed. In reality there is nothing strange or inconsistent in this, for the wise and all-powerful Manager of the universe is continually making the wrath of man to praise Him and restraining the remainder. (Psalm 76:10). The beast from the abyss was allowed to bring about the end of religious persecution; but when this beastly power seemed about to get out of control, the little corporal on horseback, with his whiff of grapeshot, restored more or less the previous status quo. Various ups and downs have since occurred. Though a large proportion of the population of the world is now in the grip of this same satanic power, and although its doctrines and practices have infiltrated the social and the intellectual life of the West, yet religious and civil liberty still prevail in actual practice, and will thus prevail until God's last message of warning and salvation has gone to every people in every clime.

The fact that a quarter of a century before 1798 "persecution had almost wholly ceased" (*The Great Controversy*, p. 306) is good proof that the primary cause of the deadly wound was something preceding and vastly more important than the French Revolution. It is highly probable that the great social and religious uprising at the close of the eighteenth century was itself only a by-product of something larger and more important than what took place in Italy and France in 1798. The captivity of the pope has served admirably to focus the attention of the world on what was then happening, but it was merely a symbol of that paralysis of the satanic beast power which was then taking place and which has continued ever since.

That "true Light, which lighteth every man that cometh into the world" often suffers so much chromatic aberration because of the miseducation and perversity of human beings that it sometimes shows strange forms and colors. The essential idea of the Protestant Reformation was the individual's personal accountability to God and his inalienable right to soul liberty and freedom from every form of religious domination. George Washington and his compatriots, with their Christian environment and upbringing, succeeded in separating church and state and in establishing these freedoms in an orderly, dignified manner. The mobs of Paris, with their essentially pagan environment, tried to imitate what had just then occurred across the Atlantic, but did not know how, and made a sorry mess of their work. The world in general had wild dreams about the innate goodness and perfectibility of human nature and the inevitability of progress, dreams which in our day have expanded into the evolution theory and the so-called scientific view of the world. But the result of all this has been the fulfillment of the prophecy we are here studying, the infliction of the death stroke to all forms of religious persecution—a death stroke which only now, after almost two centuries, shows marked signs of healing.

In Revelation 13:3 the same sentence that mentions the deadly wound goes on to say, "And his deadly wound was healed: and all the world wondered after the beast." From the close sequence of the two statements many have drawn the mistaken conclusion that the healing follows almost immediately after the infliction of the wound. But the deadly wound was something vastly more important than the interval of a year or two between the death of

the exiled pope and the election of his successor. The wound means much more than the temporary interruption of some of the functions of the Catholic Church. To revert to the symbols given in chapter 17, it was not the woman that received the wound, but the beast. Obviously the wound means the taking away of the beastly power to dominate the world and deal with "heretics." This deadly wound will not be healed until the old power of persecution is restored.

How is it that so many people point to the present popularity and prosperity of the Catholic Church as proof that the deadly wound is already healed? Why do they not see that they are confusing the symbols of woman and beast, and crediting the still defunct beast with the church's health and prosperity, which are never once threatened in prophecy until its final, inglorious end by fire in Revelation 18? The nearest to something like a threat against the church's prosperity is found in Revelation 18:7, where great Babylon boasts that she is a queen, and no widow, plainly implying that her paramour, the "beast," has come to life again, or recovered from the death stroke. But being a widow for a time is vastly different from being dead from a death stroke. A large part of the message of the present study is to clear up this confusion in order to enable Adventists to present a clear and convincing message to the world in the days ahead.

There can be no dispute about the present growth and prosperity of the Church of Rome. The three traditionally Protestant nations—Germany, Great Britain, and America—are visibly journeying toward Canossa. On every side are signs of reviving respect for the name and the ways of Rome. All this indicates a changing world climate more favorable for the healing of the deadly wound of nearly two centuries ago, but of themselves these shifting attitudes are far short of the prophesied healing. Not until Rome again has the power to make her will and doctrines effective through cooperating legislative enactments and judicial decrees will the wound be healed. But such a day is coming on apace. Perhaps right here a misunderstanding needs to be cleared up. The wound is mentioned in chapter 13 in a symbol where the church and the state are not differentiated, the two being combined under the one symbol of the leopard beast; but in chapter 17, where a clear distinction is shown between the drunken woman and the beast upon which she rides, the woman is not said to be wounded or out of action. The beast only is affected, and it is completely paralyzed—it "is not." (Verse 8). In chapter 18, meaning a later period, the woman congratulates herself that she is no longer a widow; but it is plain that no part of the prophecy ever represents the Catholic Church as having been wounded or even hurt at all. Her paramour is the one who suffers the wound, and he is completely out of action.

This is exactly the situation. The woman is alive, obviously healthy and strong; but the beast which she formerly drove as she wished, now refuses to obey her dictates. Nevertheless the prophecy tells plainly that a change is coming; the deadly wound is going to be healed. The beast is going to "ascend out of the bottomless pit." (Revelation 17:8). On every side we see ominous signs of just such a resurgence of the beastly intolerance of past ages. Of course, a radical change in the public opinion of the world will be necessary in order to bring about such a condition. Just how this change will come about only the future will reveal, but the Manager of the universe has His own ways of bringing about the fulfillment of His Word. A restoration of the power to deal with "heresy" is plainly foretold in several of the prophecies; and in the face of these predictions we have faith to believe God's Word instead of any human opinions or guessing. When this restoration of the power to deal with "heretics" does take place, when the deadly wound is really healed, the prophetic time of the end will be near its close, and the climax of the ages will follow.

6

## THE FALSE PROPHET

The Bible's description of the false prophet, would be surprising enough if it were meant to apply long ago; but since it is meant for our modern age, the description given in Revelation 13:11-17 is evidently meant to amaze and alarm us. This creature is portrayed by Inspiration as more dangerous than any preceding power, more dangerous because more cunningly deceptive. He is pictured as the most consummate impostor and deceiver in all human history. The leopard beast is described as blasphemous and cruel; but the false prophet is spoken of as slick and clever, with the ability to work amazing wonders that appear to be actual miracles for the purpose of inducing everybody to worship the leopard beast. The prediction is that he actually succeeds in this nefarious work and gets all but a few to make a living, breathing image of the leopard beast, and induces all the earth dwellers to worship the first beast and its image. Thus the deadly wound is completely healed. This is why this upstart two-horned beast as the False Prophet but lets see what is this all about.

While in its upstart it may seem to be a false prophet because of its deception of Church and State separation, it only acts to give to birth something bigger than what it portrays. All this is a religious activity; only in a very secondary sense can it be regarded as political. A prophet of any sort, true or false, is a religious, not a civil, official. Because its entire career is so effective in its deception and seduction, this creature is in reality one of the worst and most dangerous in all prophecy. Who is it that he is deceiving? The last generation of mankind, supposedly the best educated, the most intelligent and sophisticated of all the race. That it is the last generation is proved by the fact that this false prophet is described as being finally "cast alive" (with its partner, the leopard beast) into the first lake of fire at the second coming of Christ. (Revelation 19:20). Several identification marks help us decide that this false prophet, must symbolize the Apostate Protestantism of the Occidental world, most typically seen in the United States of America but spread all over the world today.

The False Prophet: this name indicates that this new power is primarily religious, not merely secular. This must mean Protestantism, for this is the only important religious force in the New World apart from Catholicism. But it must be an apostate, degenerate form of Protestantism, for it is a false prophet. It proves its falseness by deceiving the people into making a living, breathing image of the first beast. The modernism, or evolutionism, which has taken possession of Protestantism in both Europe and America is ample proof of apostasy; but this work of deceiving the world into worshiping the leopard beast is the outward proof of its base apostasy. What someone has called the Americanization of Christianity is a sufficient characterization. A strong overtone of spiritism must also be included.

In the early days of the world the Bible dwelt much on the replacement of one nation by another. But in the sight of Heaven the spread of ideas is much more important than the shift of national boundary lines. And since the work of God and its opposition have both become global in extent, the prophecies of the last days ignore national distinctions and deal with the spread of doctrines or ideologies. Hence we should train ourselves to think of the entire world of our day as divided into just two camps: the dragon (the apostate church and its confederacies), against the children of God. Such classification of the world during the time of the end must ignore nationalities and deal with doctrines and ideas.

On this basis, the dragon (here used as synonymous with the beast from the abyss) would be larger and more inclusive than Marxian communism, the leopard beast would include more than the Roman Church, and the false prophet must be larger than the United States, or even larger than apostate Protestantism. This Apostate Protestantism started in America has become an example and a norm to the whole world.

Accordingly, it is not difficult to understand why some students of these subjects prefer to think of this false prophet as symbolizing the democratic and scientific age in which the world has been living for more than a century—in other words, that it represents the intellectual and cultural climate of this time of the world in which we are now living. Without question it has had a predominantly Protestant background. From the churches and universities and publishing centers of Germany, Great Britain, and America it has radiated out over most of the world. But along with its genuine light from heaven it has also given to the world a strongly intoxicating wine of “world progress,” with the plain religious implication that the traditional millennium will be the next event on the world program, the next stage in human evolution. This is always the background for the modern movements for world peace.

When private individuals entertain wrong ideas about the world’s future, usually not much harm results. But when rulers or influential groups think themselves in partnership with God and undertake to remold the world nearer to their own heart’s desire, instead of their artificial heaven on earth they usually succeed in making a hell on earth for their opponents. Of all the strange ideas that have confused humanity during the centuries, none have worked more ruin and misery than false views about the coming of the Messiah and what He is to do. What a record of blood and devastation they have made!

These false ideas caused the crucifixion of Jesus and all the horrors of the destruction of Jerusalem under the Romans. In a certain real sense they laid the foundation of the Catholic Church, with its Crusades, the Inquisition, its wars of religion, its St. Bartholomew, its dragonnades; and a revulsion against these produced the Red Terror of the French Revolution. All the starry-eyed utopian dreams past and present are variant forms of twisted ideas about a coming millennium, and the present obsession about disarmament and world peace stems from the same mistaken notions. In the days just ahead, when all the powers of earth conspire together to produce their delusive unity and to compel God’s people to conform with the majority, it will be the same evil theory about the reign of the Messiah that will impel the persecutors to their final act of warring against God in the person of His followers. “Papists, Protestants, and worldlings will alike accept the form of godliness without the power, and they will see in this union a grand movement for the conversion of the world, and the ushering in of the long-expected millennium.”—*The Great Controversy*, pp. 588, 589. But alas for such false hopes and delusive dreams! Much of the world has already awakened to the stark reality that this is a vain vision; nor can it be long until the preacher of this vision will be denounced as a false prophet. But since this seductive vision has been largely responsible for preventing the healing of the deadly wound, the reaction from this disillusionment may well be the chief cause for finally bringing about the antichrist’s complete recovery.

The account of the false prophet, as given in the last half of Revelation 13, deals almost wholly with the amazing wonders which he performs and the way in which he uses these wonders to deceive the world. For my part, I can never read this account without thinking of the scientific marvels of our day and of the way in which these scientific achievements are constantly used to support theories about the origin of the world and the beginning of mankind which are completely contradictory to what is taught in the Bible. It has long been the custom among the students of this prophecy to postpone all these wonders to the future. But obviously the deceptions based on the miracles precede the dragon voice and help materially to make this voice effective. James White often complained about some Adventists of his day who were more interested in future truth than in present truth. Certainly one of the most dangerous forms of deception is in being totally blind to God’s prophetic warnings which are fulfilling all around us.

It is high time for some Adventists to awake to the meaning of the events now transpiring. Although quick changes are characteristic of our age, it seems reasonable that the deceptions practiced by this false prophet in preparing the way for the making of the image of the beast

cannot be all in the future but are here with us at hand. Obviously, the deceptions which prepare the way for this fatal action must be going on around us, and we ought to ask ourselves, What are they? Are we also being deceived by them?

It is these deceptions which make him a false prophet, that is, a false teacher; for the original word carries the idea of teaching or proclaiming, rather than of merely foretelling. It is plain that the prophecy here is placing the emphasis on the religious aspects of this world power. Protestant America may be the most prominent example of this power; but the symbol of the false prophet is best interpreted as meaning Protestantism as a worldwide power, wherever found or wherever its influence exists. Only by making this false prophet mean modernistic apostate Protestantism, rather than the mere civil aspects of the United States, can we give in Australia, China, Greenland, or Ceylon any worthwhile meaning to the message of the third angel of Revelation 14. This angel, like the first, is to go to every nation, and kindred, and tongue, and people; and its specific warning is against what the false prophet is doing or is going to do. Since the warning is universal, the power against which the warning is directed must likewise be universal.

During this period of the deadly wound the church has an opportunity to carry the gospel of the soon-coming kingdom to all the world, as the Master foretold long ago. (Matthew 24:14). False doctrines on any subject are never harmless. In a world of sin and sinners, even such seemingly harmless ideas as religious and civil liberty can be twisted into agencies of evil. In Eden the fruit of the tree of knowledge was not forbidden because it was poisonous for the body, but because any knowledge gained contrary to a command of God must surely become poison for the soul. When Lot pitched his tent toward Sodom, he had good ambitions; he was planning better social and intellectual opportunities for himself and his family. But freedom and cultural opportunities, like the power spoken of by King Alfred the Great, are only good when those who have them are good. The conditions Lot found in Sodom were only those which everybody wants to attain: "pride, fulness of bread, and abundance of idleness." (Ezekiel 16:49).

Just one point more. The last half of Revelation 13 deals with the clever deceptions of the false prophet, by which he befools the earth dwellers into doing evil things contrary to the cause of God, and thus brings on the final crisis for all the world. As already stated, the ones thus deceived are the last generation of mankind, obviously the most sophisticated and most scientifically educated of all the long line of humanity—a most surprising situation. Only one specific trick of deception is mentioned: he brings fire down from heaven in the sight of men, that is, in public. Many have thought of this as similar to the work of Elijah on Mount Carmel. But the text does not say that he prepares for this as a test; it simply declares that he does this in a public way, and afterward appeals to this work which he has done as a proof of his miraculous power. And the record seems to imply that this act is only one of several of similar character and for a similar purpose. Amazing acts are characteristic of this false prophet. And the Bible speaks of them not as mere tricks or impostures, but as genuine signs or wonders, or "miracles," as in the King James Version. But what is a miracle? Probably we should say that everything God does is "natural," or in accord with all of His basic laws for the universe. So we have to question the power behind these miracles, is it in line with obedience to the word of God or not.

While we are having all the above, what is making it deceptive is the apostasy of Protestantism and their false biblical interpretation, the rejection of the literal creation week and the law of God. Dan 7:25. When science misses the mark and is supported by false Christian views, then you get the false prophet. It's not only in America we are witnessing this false Protestantism but all over the world with this wrong interpretation of the bible. In summary we say that American Protestantism is the false prophet.

## BABYLON THE GREAT

The seventeenth chapter of the Revelation probably contains more definitions and explanations of prophetic symbolism than all the rest of the New Testament put together. These explanations have been of invaluable help in understanding other prophecies, such as those of the Book of Daniel. Yet Revelation 17 has itself remained an enigma until very recent times. All sorts of strange interpretations have been offered. Of course the general meaning of the two main symbols is too plain for equivocation. Even Roman Catholic theologians admit that in prophecy a woman means a religious body, or what is commonly called a "church"; but since they boast that Rome never errs and never can err, this drunken, dissolute woman cannot possibly mean her. And they see nothing wrong or reprehensible in the woman riding the beast, that is, the church dominating or directing the civil power; so that if the other parts of the chapter could by mischance or possibility point in her direction, nothing evil or blame worthy would be meant by the position and activity of this harlot.

Those who call themselves Fundamentalist Protestants are of course completely debarred from interpreting this chapter in terms of past history of any sort, for they follow the example of certain Catholic expositors in pushing antichrist and all his evil works over into a hypothetical future age. So what possible interest can they have in the historical interpretation of this or any other prophecy of the New Testament? Uriah Smith and other Adventists have always applied this prophecy to the great apostasy, and in this they were undoubtedly correct. But Smith had little to say about the details.

This study takes the position that no correct understanding of this chapter was possible as long as the many explanations here found were understood as having been given by the angel from the standpoint of the Roman Empire, instead of having been viewed by John and explained by the angel in terms of the last days, the time of the end. Was it not one of the angels with the seven last plagues who showed this vision to John? And was not John picked up and carried "away in the spirit" from his own place and time, to see conditions as they would be down at the very close of earth's history? With this viewpoint clarified we can at least make a good start in trying to interpret the message of this chapter. A second vital viewpoint needs to be settled concerning verses 8 and 10, for these two verses seem to be meant as contemporary. No slightest hint is given of a change of viewpoint from the one verse to the other. They are both given by the same angel, in the same explanation, of the same vision, at the same time. Both verses deal with the same numerical symbols, and both verses use all three tenses—past, present, and future. Hence what every law of exegesis puts together, no a priori theory of interpretation should dare to put asunder.

It is not fair or safe exegesis that would separate verse 8 from the following verses, saying that the angel's explanation begins with verse 9. Like all the explanations of Daniel's extended prophecies, this one in Revelation 17 begins with a brief summary of the entire message, down to the end of human history or the going into perdition. But this outline is a vital part of the angel's explanation and must not be separated from the remainder. It is arbitrary and unscholarly to divide what the angel says, applying part to one age and part to another, when the text gives no hint of any such division. If verses 8 and 10 were meant to be contemporary, they must be an intentional paradox, or an apparent self-contradiction. Verse 8 says that the beast of persecution "was, and is not"; verse 10 declares that one of the heads "is," or "is reigning" (Goodspeed). However, Jesus constantly used paradoxes in His conversations, so why should a puzzle like this be considered strange in this passage? Fundamental to making any good sense out of this chapter, as it seems to me, is the settled conviction that these two verses must be regarded as contemporary, meant to portray conditions that would be contemporary in our modern world, the time of the end. If so, then

there must be some essential difference between the meaning of the "beast" of verse 8 and the "head" of verse 10. But such a difference is easy to recognize. They cannot be exactly the same in meaning, and probably the apparent contradiction in their meaning was employed in order to lead us to study out the highly important message which they have for our generation. The "beast" plainly does not mean the Catholic Church per se, for she is alive and prosperous, though her power to deal with "heretics" is gone, and this is the sense in which the deadly wound of the beast (not the woman) is still unhealed. Thus the "beast" in this verse has the power to persecute for religion, or the ability to enforce conformity.

Let us now look at the meaning of the "heads" of verses 9 and 10, one of which "is" or "is reigning" at the very same time. Repeatedly we have shown our view that these seven heads signify successive civilizations, from the earliest times down to the present. Accordingly, the five that "are fallen" would be the five preceding stages of world history which passed away before the beginning of the time of the end in 1798. And our modern times may be described as characterized by the two freedoms, civil and religious, as already explained. These have culminated in the anti-Genesis apostasy here in America, while via the French Revolution they have culminated in the communism now dominant throughout so much of the rest of the world.

Persecution has not yet started, for the wound is not yet fully healed. But the "head" now reigning has long been deceiving the earth dwellers by means of the miracles which he has been permitted to do; and it will not be long until the rest of the prophecy will be seen as being fulfilled. So let us merely try out this idea to see if it will work. I mean that we should follow out the logical consequences of this hypothesis to see what it involves.

1. It will mean that the period of the deadly wound is contemporary with the time of the end.
2. It will fit very nicely into the correct view that the woman was not at all injured by the deadly wound, except to be deprived of her consort paramour and made a widow. But Revelation 18:7 looks past that time to a period subsequent to the healing of the wound, when the beast has come to life again and the woman exultingly proclaims that she is no longer a widow.
3. The "is not" period of Revelation 17:8 corresponds perfectly with our present day, for the power to persecute God's people (the "beast" power) is today nonexistent, though many signs indicate that it may soon be revived on a global scale.
4. The five stages of universal oppression and tyranny (verse 10) are gone, or "are fallen"; the one that "is," No. 6, is just cleverly deceptive and latent, not active. But this latent beast power gives many indications of reviving life. And when it does again become alive, it will continue for only a little while, or a "short space."

Remember that this part of the prophecy is dealing with the beast, not the woman. Not the woman but the beast is out of action during this time-of-the-end period. In chapter 17 the two are plainly differentiated. In chapter 13, where the church and the state are blended and not separated, it is the leopard beast which receives the deadly wound; and this leopard beast is usually defined as symbolizing the Roman Church. But it is not a safe exegesis to consider the thirteenth chapter alone, and not compare it with its parallel, or duplicate, in the seventeenth chapter. Revelation 17 says nothing about the woman being put out of action, but it does say that at the time spoken of "the beast that thou sawest was, and is not." (Verse 8).

This agrees exactly with the reality. The Catholic Church certainly is not out of action; it is very much alive. But if we separate the woman from the beast on which she rides, we reach a more accurate picture of the present situation. Then if we define the beast in the more abstract way as the devil's power to persecute God's people, always exercised through some human organization, then the beast can be said correctly to be out of existence whenever the

evil one has no human organization through which to exercise this power. And this is now the situation. Persecution on a worldwide scale has not been seen for nearly two centuries. The Roman Church is still very much alive; but its "great iron teeth" (Daniel 7:7) have been pulled. The beast is still powerless because of the deadly wound. It "was, and is not."

There seems no possibility of denying that this "is not" stage of the beast is meant to correspond to the time of the deadly wound of Revelation 13:3. This means the whole of what we call modern times and corresponds to the youthful stage of the beast arising out of the earth with two horns like a lamb. At this stage in its career this two-horned beast has not yet become one of the seven heads, for the latter term is used only of world powers when acting the devil's part in actively opposing the work and the people of God. Later, when it speaks like a dragon, it will become No. 7 of the series, and with the leopard beast will be "cast alive" into the lake of fire. (Revelation 19:20).

But our present day, or from 1798 onward, comes between the five that "are fallen" and No. 7, which "is not yet come." (Revelation 17:10). Hence this time of the end must be the time for No. 6, as has been explained in a previous chapter. And the time from which this vision was shown to the apostle would have to be during the latter part of this time of the end, during the reign of No. 6 of the seven "heads."

A third problem involving the time viewpoint, the time in the world's history from which these matters were shown to the prophet, appears in verses 12 to 17 of this chapter. These verses tell of the ten kings finally having "one mind" (verse 13), and agreeing to "give their kingdom unto the beast" (verse 17). Ellen G. White very plainly applies these passages to the very last hours of time, when all the world will unite against God's people. It used to be taught by some writers that this condition of having "one mind" was during the Dark Ages, when Rome did rule most of the civilized world. But this is scarcely what this prophecy means. These verses are a part of the same divine explanation given by the angel with the seven last plagues; and they apply to the last days of human history. It seems to be a misapplication of these verses to assign them to the Dark Ages; instead they portray an absolutely global combination, when all the powers of earth will combine in a warfare against the apparently helpless people of God. Such an interpretation agrees fully with the following statement by Ellen G. White:

"The so-called Christian world is to be the theater of great and decisive actions. Men in authority will enact laws controlling the conscience, after the example of the papacy. Babylon will make all nations drink of the wine of the wrath of her fornication. Every nation will be involved. ...These have one mind, and shall give their power and strength unto the beast.' "There will be a universal bond of union, one great harmony, a confederacy of Satan's forces."—*Manuscript* 24, 1891. Isaiah 8:9-15 is an Old Testament prophecy foretelling this same worldwide combination of the nations in the last of the last days. The "confederacy" here spoken of is exactly equivalent to the statement about the ten kings having "one mind." And both are parallel to the passage in chapter 16 about the three unclean spirits gathering the kings of the entire world "to the battle [war] of that great day of God Almighty." (Revelation 16:13, 14).

In the passage last quoted, however, the dragon is mentioned along with the beast and the false prophet as making war against God and His people. The spectacular and tragic doom of the drunken woman is told in the funeral dirge of chapter 18, while the end of the beast on which she was riding is given in Revelation 19:20. Thus these three chapters, seventeen to nineteen, are a unit, dealing with the various ways in which all the powers in opposition to God and His truth in the last days finally meet their tragic and inglorious termination, their ultimate destruction. And chapter 17 is the introduction to all this. Babylon the Great is a divinely chosen symbol that in its broadest sense represents the devil's style of apostate religion during all human history now being revealed through the papacy, from the first

beginnings of Babylon at Babel down to the second triumph of Rome, when the false prophet induces all the world to worship the beast and his image. Similarly the beast on which the woman is mounted symbolizes the devil's style of civil government during the same time, the seven successive attempts, more or less successful, to control the national affairs of the world.

Some form of apostate religion has always been used by Satan to manipulate the civil power to hinder God's work and make trouble for His people. I say "always," but that means until the period spoken of in the prophecy when the beast "is not." (Revelation 17:8). During our modern times, the time of the end, the people of God have been having a rest from governmental persecution. The two horns like a lamb, civil and religious freedom, have been dominant for nearly two centuries. The beast has been suffering from a death stroke, a deadly wound; in the Greek it means that it looked as if it had had its throat cut "to death." But soon this deadly wound will be healed, the beast will come to life again, and then the entire world will follow after him in admiring wonder. Then the false prophet will unite with the lamb like beast and begin to speak like a dragon, and all the other events prophesied will follow in rapid succession. This will be a distressing period when only two parties are standing on the face of the earth: Babylon the Great with her confederacies against the children of God. May God protect us from delusion and deception during the horrible times just ahead.

## THE BADGE OF LOYALTY

From the beginning the Creator planned to have a memorial of His *method* of creating. It would be for the good and lasting happiness of mankind for them to remember His creatorship, His power, His sovereignty. He could have accomplished the making of the earth and its plants and animals in one day, or even instantaneously. But He did not. He might have prolonged this creative act for ten days, or thirty. But He did not. He deliberately planned to do it by stages, spread out over six days, with a special extra day making it a literal week at the close as an official memorial of what He had done and *how He had done it*. Then He put a perpetual blessing upon every succeeding seventh day as a holy rest day, in memory of the Creator's resting, or ceasing from the divine activity of the work of creation. The mere fact of creation is important, but God thought that the method was also important and should be remembered.

During the centuries this divine memorial accomplished its design for all who remembered it to keep it holy. But in the time of the prophet Daniel God foretold that in times then future a world power would arise that would attempt to change this divine memorial. (Daniel 7:25). That was a prophecy of what would take place. In due course of time the Catholic Church did attempt to do this very thing, to change the Sabbath to Sunday. She boasts about having made this change and points to the change as proof of her power and authority in such matters. For more than a thousand years this attempt at high-handed religious vandalism has seemed to succeed. The world in general has adopted the change. Today even non-Christian peoples and nations keep holiday on the day appointed by the Bishop of Rome. But the Creator foresaw all this and made provision to meet it. He foresaw also that in the time of the end a strange godless philosophy would capture the attention of mankind, teaching that the things of nature have in themselves the potency of their own development, thus abolishing the idea of any definite beginning or creation of anything and substituting for it the doctrine of continuous, gradual change. The Lord forewarned that the perverse race would contend that "all things continue as they were from the beginning" (2 Peter 3:4), and that the same will continue indefinitely into the future—"To morrow shall be as this day, and much more abundant" (Isaiah 56:12). And so in His divine wisdom He planned to use this situation for the last test to be brought before the human race—the final, life-and-death choice for all mankind just before the second coming of Christ.

Connected with this triumph of the evolution philosophy, the Creator also foresaw another subtle form of denying any genuine creation at the beginning of this world, for it is being charged that God would be deceiving mankind by creating mature plants and animals, with countless indications of their having grown by natural processes. Did God create trees with rings in their wood, which would seem to tell of growth which never took place, spiral snail shells with whorls indicating growth which never occurred, or full-blown roses which seemed to have grown from buds, but did not? In short, would not God have been deceiving Adam and Eve in their study of plants and animals, by the countless indications of growth and slow development, if He really created a mature, well-balanced world by a fiat creation?

This is the modern form of the old, old poser, whether Adam was created with his second set of teeth and a fully ossified skeleton. Or to put it more bluntly and vividly, Did Adam have a navel? If he did not, his descendants would not resemble their parents; but if he had an umbilicus, or the scar on the abdomen, and this was never attached by a cord to the uterus of a mother, would not such a scar be a living lie, seeming to tell of events which never took place?

It would seem impossible for a complete world of animals and plants to be started off as a going concern by a fiat creation in only a few days, without there being countless appearances of previous growth and development which never took place. Many birds, insects, and other animals, for instance, require seeds or mature fruit for food, and could not wait for this food to develop. The first man also needed ripe fruits and nuts, and such food would necessarily involve many appearances of age which would be misleading if examined critically then and there. In short, everywhere throughout the world there would be evidences of apparent age which would be completely misleading unless explained to our first parents. Accordingly, something like the Sabbath would be essential to remind all subsequent generations that the beginnings of our world were radically different from the "natural" processes now going on.

In other words, anything like a fiat creation demands also something like the Sabbath to prevent subsequent generations from misreading the present acting laws of nature, for these that we call natural processes can never tell us how the world originated. The same general principle is involved when we in modern times find two or more isotopes of lead in association with uranium in the rocks. The creationist would say that the ages of transformation thus indicated may never have taken place, for when God made the world by a fiat creation, necessarily He made it complete, a balanced, going concern, in which the mineralogical and chemical processes would be in various stages of completeness, many of them looking as if they had been preceded by long ages of change. And thus their appearance would be unreliable.

The attempt to date objects or strata by the carbon-14 method is somewhat different; and if we assume uniformity backward to the time of the Deluge, this method, when properly carried on, may be reasonably accurate back that far. But many believe that the present conditions of bombardment from outer space did not prevail before that time, because of radically different atmospheric conditions in prediluvian times. And obviously, no believer in a fiat creation will admit that the carbon-14 method is trustworthy farther back than the date of the creation. Hence this method of dating the past has no value for the creationist back more than a very few millenniums.

From all this it is evident that the entire problem of the reliability of natural science is involved. Is nature trustworthy? Can we trust the evidence of our senses? Modern scientists are loud in declaring that God would be deceiving us if He created mature trees with rings, roses which did not develop from buds, horses or cows with fully ossified bones, or human beings and other mammals with umbilical scars, implying a former attachment to a mother, when such was not the case. The answer to all this is profoundly important for our day and generation. The Creator gave our first parents the Sabbath as the key to all these puzzles. In the light of the meaning of the Sabbath, neither the first pair nor any of their descendants ought to misunderstand the rings in the trees or any other indications of gradual growth when dealing with any plant or animal of the original creation. The knowledge that God had created a fully balanced world of mature plants and animals in six solar days would save our first parents and all their offspring from believing the falsehood of evolution by slow development during long ages. The latter method would necessarily involve long periods of suffering and death on the part of millions of the lower animals, and this would plainly be contrary to the methods of a wise and kindly Creator. By creating the world a well-balanced going concern, with many plants and animals mature from the start, God could have a painless, deathless, sinless world to begin with, which He could truthfully pronounce "very good" (Genesis 1:31); whereas, by the process of development or evolution the opposite would be the case. And the Sabbath was given to save the world from any mistaken theories about the origin of the plants and animals, or of man himself.

Not only in the early days of the world was the Sabbath an answer to any misunderstanding of nature which might arise, it is equally so today. Nobody who remembers the Sabbath to keep it holy as commanded can possibly be led astray by the noisy claims of modern uniformitarian science. The Sabbath and evolution cannot be entertained by the same mind. But why such amazing scientific discoveries and inventions in recent years? The first part of the answer is that if they were due to natural development, they would have come about gradually, not all crowded into the last century or so of human history.

In a world made up predominantly of sinners, that is, of mutineers and rebels, any greatly increased knowledge of and command over nature would not be an unmixed blessing. Knowledge means power; and power is never good unless those who possess it are good. As the Creator looked down the tear-misted vistas of the future centuries, He saw how the last generation of mankind would abuse the two freedoms which they would be enjoying in this time of the end, the freedom to think and to do. The vastly greater knowledge of nature thus permitted would be perverted, human pride and Luciferian ambition would invent a theory about inevitable world progress from crude beginnings, and men would try to make themselves believe that soon they would be well able to solve all the problems of life and enjoy a peaceful world without any dependence upon God for anything. Having long ago discarded the divine memorial of a real, literal creation, they would explain away the other basic ideas of God's system of salvation and would finally plan to liquidate the troublesome few who are determined to remain loyal to their Creator and His official memorial. (Revelation 12:17).

Accordingly, when God's last gospel message is preached in all the world for a witness unto all nations, in preparation for the end of human history (Matthew 24:14), it must of necessity be adapted to the situation then existing. It must tell of the judgment hour, the court week in heaven then going on; and it must also call upon this generation of evolutionists and university-trained pagans to "worship him that made heaven, and earth, and the sea, and the fountains of waters." (Revelation 14:7). Necessarily also in this crisis hour God would make a test case of the Sabbath, His official memorial and the badge of loyalty to Himself, in diametric contrast to the counterfeit hallmark invented by the rebels. Those who were determined to obey their Creator would of course remember the Sabbath to keep it holy, and would do so because they believed in the real fiat creation it commemorated. All others would keep the rival institution, "the wild solar holiday of all pagan times."

How could the basic issues of the last crisis hour be made more simple or more plain? "If the Lord be God, follow him: but if Baal, then follow him." 1 Kings 18:21. "But as for me and my house, we will serve the Lord." Joshua 24:15. Adventists believe that this Sabbath issue will become more and more prominent and vital down to the last hours of time. They do not look for any mitigation of the growing apostasy in the direction of evolutionism and the denial of the Genesis record of creation. On the contrary, they are confident that their Sabbath reform movement has been planned for just such a situation as now prevails. The late editor of the official denominational journal said this:

"It is when we see the Sabbath in the setting of the modern apostasy that we can best understand the unique status of Adventists in the religious world. This Advent movement is the only religious body with a message that directly meets the key heresy of our age, the evolution theory, and calls on all who wish to come out of Babylon, out of apostasy, to accept the true sign of allegiance to the living God, the Creator. We stand revealed today as calling on men to join with us not simply in a technical dispute over the seventh or the first day of the week or to keep another day just to be different. We call on men to keep the Sabbath as a sign of allegiance to the Creator of the heavens and the earth, as a badge of loyalty to the great truths of revelation, all of which rest on the opening chapters of the Bible."—Francis D. Nichol, *Answers to Objections*, 1952 ed., p. 709.

In another connection this writer tells of a conversation he once had with a Baptist minister at about the time of the Scopes trial in Tennessee. This Baptist deplored the split then developing over evolution and remarked to Nichol that he supposed the Adventists were experiencing a similar cleavage. "I assured him that so far from our having a split we had not even the beginnings of it. He looked amazed and asked whether I could possibly explain it. I replied, 'How is it possible for Adventists to give any credence to the evolution theory, when every week they set aside a whole day as a memorial to Him who created the heavens and the earth, as the book of Genesis describes?' He gazed at me a moment and then exclaimed, 'I'd never thought of the Sabbath in that way before.'"—*Our Firm Foundation*, Vol. I, p. 621.

One more point needs to be understood in this connection, namely, the way in which the present religioscientific situation tends to strengthen the Church of Rome. By the Council of Trent and in its catechisms and authoritative publications the Roman Catholic Church has claimed Sunday (the rival of the Sabbath) as the official sign of its power and authority to appoint holy days and to command the obedience of mankind. Everywhere today men have become confused and unsettled. They anxiously look for something or some institution to which they can appeal as a source of confidence, some authority in moral and religious matters. This is why we see such a steady procession of well-known people to the Catholic Church. A writer in a Protestant journal explained it thus:

"I hold no brief for the Roman Catholic Church. It would be impossible for me intellectually to accept its teachings. But, if Roman Catholicism wins ultimately, it will be because men and women, tired in soul, stand ready to forget its many archaic remnants of the past, and kneel before the altar, where for them an avenue may lead to the presence of their God." Long ago we Adventists were warned that just such a state of affairs would surely come. "A day of great intellectual darkness has been shown to be favorable to the success of the papacy. It will yet be demonstrated that a day of great intellectual light is equally favorable for its success. In past ages, when men were without God's word, and without the knowledge of the truth, their eyes were blindfolded, and thousands were ensnared, not seeing the net spread for their feet.

In this generation there are many whose eyes become dazzled by the glare of human speculations, 'science falsely so called'; they discern not the net, and walk into it as readily as if blindfolded. God designed that man's intellectual powers should be held as a gift from his Maker, and should be employed in the service of truth and righteousness; but when pride and ambition are cherished, and men exalt their own theories above the word of God, then intelligence can accomplish greater harm than ignorance. Thus the false science of the present day, which undermines faith in the Bible, will prove as successful in preparing the way for the acceptance of the papacy, with its pleasing forms, as did the withholding of knowledge in opening the way for its aggrandizement in the Dark Ages."—*The Great Controversy*, pp. 572, 573.

The profound importance of the statement of this paragraph calls for the careful attention of every lover of truth. It was first written about three quarters of a century ago, when the significance of the then-rising evolution philosophy was not understood by the world in general, and was overlooked by many Adventists. During the passing decades, however, these scientific speculations have captured the minds of the entire civilized world. The moral and intellectual climate of the world has changed. This paragraph shows how this change is going to be favorable to the ultimate rejuvenation of the Roman Church and her resumption of authority over the lives and consciences of men—which is exactly what is meant by the healing of the deadly wound. May God have pity on those individuals who have looked upon the discussion of Deluge geology and the refutation of organic evolution as a mere tempest in a teapot, a distraction away from the really important truths for this time. When we see the Sabbath in its timely importance as the final test for all the world, then a true

understanding of the proofs for a literal creation will be seen as vitally important for everybody. And we also see that these false scientific theories have been and still are a major cause in preparing for the healing of the deadly wound and the worldwide worship of the beast and its image.

ITS A TIME TO DEMAND "A THUS SAYETH THE LORD". You may not be heathen, atheist, pagan, evolutionist or any other name you may add but if what you are doing is not in line with the word of God and His Law, then your "BADGE OF LOYALTY" lies with another.

# THE GOSPEL OF THE KINGDOM

The gospel message after Pentecost started off in a heavenly way. The disciples and their immediate followers had no money; they had not been trained in the fashionable halls of learning of their day; they had no prestige with which to command the applause of listening senates. But those who heard "recognized that they had been with Jesus." (Acts 4:13, R.S.V). They lived above the fogs and miasmas of sin, and moment by moment they received their instructions direct from the Central Office. By following these instructions, no matter how much they were maligned and persecuted, their work was always a success in the sight of Heaven, accomplishing great things for God. So it will be again. In all parts of the earth the men and women of God, in step with one another because they are all listening to the same drumbeat from above, will march from one victory to another. The hope of the return of Christ in glory has ever been the most inspiring thought cherished by human beings. Says Ellen G. White:

"To God's pilgrim people, so long left to sojourn in 'the region and shadow of death,' a precious, joy-inspiring hope is given in the promise of His appearing, who is 'the resurrection and the life,' to 'bring home again His banished.' The doctrine of the second advent is the very key-note of the Sacred Scriptures. From the day when the first pair turned their sorrowing steps from Eden, the children of faith have waited the coming of the Promised One to break the destroyer's power and bring them again to the lost Paradise."— *The Great Controversy*, p. 299.

The declaration of Luther was, "I persuade myself verily, that the day of judgment will not be absent full three hundred years. God will not, can not, suffer this wicked world much longer." Wyclige and Tyndale, Melancthon and Calvin, have left similar records of their faith and hope. Said Knox, "Has not our Lord Jesus carried up our flesh into heaven? and shall He not return? We know that He shall return, and that with expedition."

John Milton, epic poet of the Commonwealth, implored, "Come forth out of thy royal chambers, O Prince of all the kings of the earth;... take up that unlimited scepter.... For now the voice of thy bride calls thee, and all creatures sigh to be renewed." John Wesley, commenting on the last verses in the Bible, wrote, "The spirit of adoption in the bride in the heart of every true believer says,... 'Come and accomplish all the words of this prophecy.'"

Dwight L. Moody declared that the church of his day had little to say about the return of Christ. "Now, I can see a reason for this; the devil does not want us to see this truth, for nothing would wake up the Church so much."

The special work of God in warning our generation about the imminent return of our absent King is the specific subject of the present chapter. God will never bring a judgment on the world without giving a fair warning. The present proclamation of the gospel of the coming kingdom is just such a warning; but there are cosmic aspects of the situation, for important changes are taking place at the headquarters of the universe in preparation for the return of Christ. When He does return, He will bring His rewards with Him, to give every man according to his works. Millions of the dead will then be raised, and all the righteous then living will be changed into the immortal state in a moment, in the twinkling of an eye. This obviously means that the cases of all these must have been decided beforehand, previous to the second advent.

No sin exists in heaven; but abundant records of sin are there, and these records must be examined in order to determine who among the dead of the centuries past are to be raised to immortal life in the first resurrection. This inspection of the records is not to inform God; it is

necessary in order that all the onlooking universe and all future ages may be satisfied that complete and absolute justice has been done in each individual case. This work of examining the records, termed the investigative judgment, is spoken of in many places in the Bible. One of these is Daniel 7:10: "The judgment was set, and the books were opened." In the Mosaic dispensation this period of settling accounts by inspection, or judgment, was strikingly prefigured by the Day of Atonement, or Yom Kippur, at the close of the year, a day of awful solemnity, which is still regarded by all Jews as meaning the day of judgment. The scene in Daniel 7:10 is the prophetic portrayal of the Yom Kippur of the universe. Of necessity it must be of the utmost importance for all who are living on the earth when it takes place.

As much literature published by Adventists discusses in detail the various aspects of this subject, it is not necessary to enlarge upon it here. We have good evidence to believe that this Yom Kippur of the universe began in 1844, and thus has been in progress more than a century. This gives point to the first angel's message of Revelation 14, which calls upon the evolution-minded people of our day to worship the Creator of the heavens and the earth, "for the hour of his judgment is come." (Revelation 14:6, 7).

This judgment-hour message, with the second and third which accompany it, constitutes the timely form which the gospel must necessarily take in our day. Every age has had some special form of the gospel specifically adapted to its peculiar needs. This final age is confronted with the anti-Genesis apostasy now prevailing; hence the present truth for this time admirably meets this situation. A few days before His death Jesus told the disciples that the good news about His coming kingdom would be published in all the world as a witness unto all nations, "and then shall the end come." (Matthew 24:14). Accordingly, everybody should be interested, intensely interested, in the divine description of the kind of people who are to do this work in the last days of time.

People often ask, Which is the true church? How can I be sure about it? Well, Heaven has given us a description of these people. This description is found in Revelation 12:17: "And the dragon was wroth with the woman, and went to make war with the remnant of her seed, which keep the commandments of God, and have the testimony of Jesus Christ." Since the dragon means primarily the devil, it needs no argument to prove that the people he is angry with and making war upon must be God's true people. They are spoken of as the "remnant" of the woman's seed, or the very last church, the last generation of Christians, the ones who have the responsibility of preaching the gospel about the impending kingdom just before the end. Two prominent characteristics of the people composing this remnant church are: (1) they "keep the commandments of God," and (2) they "have [or treasure] the testimony of Jesus."

1. In amazement we ask why the commandments of God should be in question in these last days of human history, the remnant church keeping them, presumably all ten of them, including the fourth about the Sabbath, and the devil making war against them for doing so.

2. But such is the actual present situation, as very briefly stated in the preceding chapter. A small minority, slightly more than a million all told, scattered through every nation and every time, are resolved to keep all of the Ten Commandments of God just as written, including the one about the Sabbath, while the rest of humanity are observing a rival day. This prophecy points ahead to trouble and persecution for the small recalcitrant minority.

1. The second characteristic of these last-day Christians against whom the dragon wages his war is that they "have the testimony of Jesus Christ." In Revelation 19:10 this term is explained to mean "the spirit of prophecy." Obviously the plain meaning is that the true church, which is preaching the gospel of the coming kingdom just before the second advent, will cherish a high regard for the prophecies of such books as Daniel and the

Revelation, in which the perils and obligations of the last days are clearly defined and in which the second advent is forcefully taught.

Another conclusion from these facts is inevitable. Since the people of this remnant church have a high respect for the Spirit of Prophecy, they will necessarily obey the admonition not to quench the Spirit and not to despise "prophesyings." (1 Thessalonians 5:19, 20). In other words, if they happen to know of contemporary manifestations of the "spirit of prophecy," they will not reject them offhand without investigation, but will have enough true spiritual discernment to "prove all things; hold fast that which is good." (Verse 21). All this means that they will not only cherish the old, long-recognized prophecies of Daniel and the Revelation, but will also give heed to whatever contemporary results of the prophetic spirit may appear among them which prove to be worthy of holding fast as "good," or of divine origin, after complete tests have been intelligently applied, as given in Isaiah 8:20 and elsewhere. This line of reasoning makes it crystal clear that the Christians of the last days against whom the dragon makes his campaign will not be liberals or modernists in theology, for the latter have no confidence in the prophecies of Daniel and the Revelation and deny that these books have given history in advance for the guidance of the church. Neither will they be futurists in their interpretation of these prophecies, for the futurists by their "gap theory," or "postponement theory," also deny that Daniel and the Revelation give the Christian church important guiding waymarks along the pathway between Calvary and the second coming.

Accordingly the only ones who conform to these specifications would be those who accept the historical interpretation of the prophecies and believe in the nearness of the second advent; that is, they must be Adventists in the original meaning of this word. The first characteristic mentioned was that they are keepers of the commandments, thus observers of the seventh-day Sabbath. For more than a century the people known as Seventh-day Adventists have been claiming that they are the ones here divinely described as the "remnant" of the people of God, who in the near future will be warred against by the dragon and his hosts. It cannot be denied that they qualify under these two specifications: they keep the commandments of God; and they have, or treasure, the testimony of Jesus, the spirit of prophecy. If they are not the ones here meant, where are we to look for them?

Seventh-day Adventists are the only people who qualify, possessing the two characteristics given in the prophecy. Seventh-day Baptists observe the Bible Sabbath, but they are not interested in the interpretation of prophecy and do not believe in any present-day manifestation of the prophetic gift. Various groups of fundamentalists say they believe in the second advent, but they repudiate the Sabbath of the fourth commandment. No other people on earth combine the two characteristics of keeping the commandments of God and holding, or cherishing and trying to follow, the Spirit of Prophecy.

Stronger than armies, stronger than all the combined power of the dragon and his forces, is a people with a divine commission for a specific work. Like their Master they can say, "The time is fulfilled, and the kingdom of God is at hand: repent ye, and believe the gospel." Mark 1:15. They also realize that they are the modern successors of the long line of those who down through the centuries have believed and treasured the predictions of the Holy Spirit of God. One who has done much to show the guiding hand of divine Providence in the understanding and interpretation of prophecy says:

"Our prophetic faith has a majestic ancestry and a historical support of which few have been aware, and which is not possessed by any other religious group today. It has a compelling force that is most impressive. It has a winsome appeal that is priceless. It offers such unassailable evidence as to make possible the maximum impression. It provides such a unique appeal to reason, and has such inescapable logic in its claim upon the conscience, that it is destined to produce a conviction surpassing any approach of the past. Such is our

glorious heritage. God expects us to capitalize to the full upon its latent power and strength in presenting the climax of His case and claims before mankind at this time. That is our real and really glorious position today.”—LeRoy Edwin Froom, *Our Firm Foundation*, Vol. II, p. 84. And again from the same author:

“Herein lies our supreme opportunity of now stepping into our rightful place as the avowed restorers of the true Protestant positions of the founding fathers of all branches of Protestantism as it formerly obtained in all Protestant lands in both hemispheres. Instead of meekly accepting an unjust consignment to the ranks of modern heretics, as concerns our prophetic faith, we should humbly but effectively assert and establish, by sound reasoning and irrefutable evidence, our actual position as the champions and sustainers of the true, historical interpretations now regrettably abandoned by most of ‘Protestantism’s spiritual descendants. We should now rise to our full and allotted place as the revivers and continuers of the true Protestant interpretation of the Reformation. This is our rightful heritage. We are simply the last segment in God’s sevenfold true church of the centuries. These former expositors of the true interpretations were of God’s true church and were true expositors in their time. We are in the line of true succession.”—*ibid.*, pp. 99, 100. In these quotations Dr. Froom is summarizing his conclusions after his long study of these subjects, as shown in his monumental four-volume *The Prophetic Faith of Our Fathers*. He has caught the electrifying inspiration from watching the fast-fulfilling prophecies and from realizing that all of God’s pre dictions will be fulfilled, and on schedule.

Froom sees the global scale on which the message of Revelation 18:4 is soon to be delivered “mightily with a strong voice.” For a hundred years we have been looking forward to this as the “loud cry.” No such message could ever be proclaimed in this manner without first having gained the attention of the intellectual classes, the educated people of Europe and America. But these four volumes are now doing this in a winning and effective way. When the rest of the denomination has learned how to make a wise use of this attention of the cultured classes, only then will our work come out of obscurity. But it is always dangerous for the people of God to have the spotlight of publicity turned upon them. In our case, we are now so near the end that inevitably it will bring persecution, swift and deadly. Every student of the life of Jesus will remember the radical change He made in His methods as He drew near the close of His ministry. Hitherto He had always sought to avoid publicity and mass enthusiasm. Time and again He had forbidden people to proclaim Him as the Messiah. But all this changed on His last journey from Galilee to Jerusalem. He sent special announcements ahead and traveled in a manner to gain the national attention. “He was going forward to the scene of His great sacrifice, and to this the attention of the people must be directed.”—*The Desire of Ages*, p. 485.

Various lines of modern science are also now coming to the support of the church. The archaeology of all the Bible lands has for many years been confirming in a wonderful way the records of the Scriptures. Biology, of course, has for many decades settled the great truth of biogenesis: life comes only from antecedent life. This means that science has no explanation for the origin of living things except that they must have been created. Then Mendelism and a sensible view of the species question now tell us that we have no explanation of how any one of the fundamental kinds of living things, either plant or animal, could possibly become changed over into any other of the fundamental units. And lastly, the Deluge theory of geology has now shown how the fossiliferous formations can best be accounted for by the hypothesis of a universal deluge, thus making the fossils contemporary, not chronological. At one stroke this liquidates the long geological “ages” and makes the entire fossil world a unity, not a series of badly misfitting parts. Hence all the basic kinds of plants and animals, including man, must have been created at essentially the same time, as recorded in Genesis.

Thus with so many lines of modern science confirming her Sacred Scriptures, the clarion call of the hour to the church of Christ is for her to renew her confidence in the Guidebook, which she has brought with her down the centuries. As her divine Lord went away, He commissioned her to carry His good news of salvation to all peoples. And as long as she remained true to this commission and to her instruction Book, the world's cunning sophistries could not deceive her, nor could the cruel power of a world empire stifle her voice. Now, when her absent Lord is about to return, it surely behooves her to set her house in order and to return with candor and fidelity to that code of written instructions left with her by her departing Master.

For the old-time believers in the Bible, the night of darkness and doubt is rapidly passing, the morning of a fuller knowledge and a surer confidence is at hand. Gone are those agonies of doubt concerning the truthfulness of the Bible's history about the beginning of the world or the adequacy of its ethics for the needs of modern society. Abandoned forever are all those futile attempts at compromise about Genesis in the vain and pitiful endeavor to translate the sublime record of creation into the language of a clumsy, inconsistent science now disintegrating before her eyes, and to twist the sublime plan of salvation to suit the demonic theory of the survival of the fittest and the Marxian doctrine of an eternal class war. The remnant church now realizes that her Bible is more accurate than the world's science.

Her hour is here. A sublime opportunity is before her, for the Creator of all nature has Himself opened up before His church the long-sealed chapters of His larger and oldest testament and is now pointing out the full harmony between it and His Written Word. He is now sending her forth with the special gospel of the coming kingdom, a message timed and specifically adapted to this age of evolutionism in science and pantheism in philosophy.

Looking along the darkening vistas of the coming centuries, the merciful Jehovah saw how a vastly increased knowledge of His created works would be perverted into a satanic burlesque of His creation, and how this would result in worldwide apostasy, in which His Written Word would be derided and scorned. Thus He timed a special reform message for His loyal people to give to the world just before the end, calling upon this generation of pantheistic evolutionists to "worship him that made heaven, and earth, and the sea, and the fountains of waters." (Revelation 14:17).

Accordingly, now, when the darkness of apostasy is most dense, a light from above has again illuminated the pages of the book of nature, the language of which is already more familiar to our modern world than the language of the Book so long distrusted and almost derided. This message direct from nature is full of the essential ideas of the gospel-faith in a personal Creator, who by His tireless care for all the organs of our bodies keeps them in order and by healing our injuries and curing our diseases inspires us with faith in Him as our Saviour and Redeemer. In such an hour, in such a world crisis, He has placed within the power of His church these modern means of travel and quick communication in order to speed on this last gospel of the coming kingdom, so as to complete it in "this generation."

IN CONCLUSION, THE MESSAGE OF REV 14:8-21 AND REV 18:1-4 HAS REACHED A TIME WHEN IT SHOULD BE SOUNDED NOISIER.

10

## SURVIVING THE CENTURIES

Under the symbol of the Two Witnesses the eleventh chapter of the Revelation gives a remarkable prophecy about the amazing circulation of the Bible in this our day, the time of the end. These Two Witnesses (meaning the Old Testament and the New) are described as having prophesied, or done their appointed work, for 1260 days (or years) while clothed in sackcloth. At the end of this period they are killed and lie unburied for a short time, after which they are resurrected and ascend up to heaven in a cloud, while their enemies look on in wonder. Obviously the entire passage is designed to show the change of status concerning the Holy Scriptures. During long centuries the Written Word of God survived only under dangers and difficulties without number. But in our day it is translated into more than a thousand languages and dialects and is shipped by the ton and the shipload to every corner of the world. From the viewpoint of God and the onlooking universe, this universal spread of the Bible in our day is without doubt the most important event on earth since Calvary and Pentecost.

We need to remember that during the first twenty-five centuries of human history no Bibles existed anywhere, no written revelation of God's will for man. Then slowly, during century after century, divinely inspired writings began to appear. But until about the middle of the first century after Christ, men had only what we now call the Old Testament. And how scarce and costly were copies! The Old Testament is really a library of many books. Every copy had to be written out by hand in a difficult script, and only by experts especially trained for the work. The addition of the New Testament added to the size of the library and to the expense. For more than another thousand years, until the invention of printing, a complete copy of the Bible would always cost the equivalent of the wages of a skilled man for an entire year, or about what we now pay for a good automobile. Considering the almost universal poverty and ignorance of all times preceding our own, how pitifully few were the copies of the Bible available, and how few could possess a copy for their very own!

We need also to remember that except in very modern times no dictionaries existed in any language to help explain difficult words or phrases. Neither was there such a mental crutch as a concordance to help locate a passage only dimly remembered. These facts, together with the sheer awkwardness and difficulty of handling scrolls or even vellum codices (the latter not available in Old Testament times), make us astounded at the intimate familiarity with work of the older writings shown by the Apostle John in the Revelation, which is absolutely saturated with quotations and allusions to the prophetic writings of the Old Testament. But this prophecy about the Two Witnesses foretells a strikingly different state of affairs at the close of the world's history. The last chapter of Daniel foretells that in the time of the end many would be rushing hither and thither, and knowledge would be increased. (Daniel 12:4). This passage in the Revelation about the Two Witnesses may be considered an enlargement and commentary on one feature of Daniel's text, for it gives what in reality is the most important aspect of Daniel's prophecy, namely, the enormous increase in understanding God's message for mankind and its circulation in printed form among all peoples and in all languages. This global spread of the Bible would be an absolutely unique and unprecedented event in human history.

As we glance back over the history of God's work during the long centuries, we see it characterized by short periods of revival, alternating with long periods of degeneracy and darkness. Contrary to general opinion, the first age of the world was one of great moral and spiritual light. Ellen G. White remarks:

"Notwithstanding the wickedness of the antediluvian world, that age was not, as has often been supposed, an era of ignorance and barbarism. The people were granted the opportunity

of reaching a high standard of moral and intellectual attainment.... "The advantages enjoyed by men of that age to gain a knowledge of God through his works have never been equaled since. And so far from being an era of religious darkness, that was an age of great light. All the world had opportunity to receive instruction from Adam, and those who feared the Lord had also Christ and angels for their teachers. And they had a silent witness to the truth, in the garden of God, which for so many centuries remained among men. At the cherubim-guarded gate of Paradise the glory of God was revealed, and hither came the first worshipers. Here their altars were reared, and their offerings presented. It was here that Cain and Abel had brought their sacrifices, and God had condescended to communicate with them. ... "Notwithstanding the prevailing iniquity, there was a line of holy men who, elevated and ennobled by communion with God, lived as in the companionship of heaven. They were men of massive intellect, of wonderful attainments. They had a great and holy mission, to develop a character of righteousness, to teach a lesson of godliness, not only to the men of their time, but for future generations."—*Patriarchs and Prophets*, pp. 82-84..

We need to remember that Adam lived to see the ninth generation of his posterity. For hundreds of years seven generations were living contemporaneously on the earth. The long overlapping of the lives of several of the ancient patriarchs both before and after the Flood explains how divine instructions could easily have been passed along from Adam to the family to which Abraham belonged. For example, Shem lived until Abraham was 150 years old. Thus in unbroken line the truth of God could be passed along, and all who desired could know the great promises of God for salvation from sin and the glorious rewards for obedience. They had no Bibles; but the accurate parental teachings, under the blessing of God, were amply sufficient to accomplish the gracious purposes of redemption.

Amid the many voices calling to us today from every side, it is of the utmost importance that we know which to heed. Which are from God, in tune with heaven and all that is good and true and elevating? Which are from the spirit of evil, trying to lead us astray? These problems of choice, involving life or death, press upon every modern individual every waking hour of the day. As the angel said to Daniel, "none of the wicked shall understand; but the wise shall understand." (Daniel 12: 10).

Throughout all ancient times, or at least down to the time of the return from the Babylonian Captivity, the Israelites were always confronted with the problem of choosing between the true prophets of God and the false ones. They had God's Written Word from the time of Moses down; and these holy writings comprised the larger part of what we now call the books of the Old Testament. Down to about the time mentioned, apparently few if any writings of the false prophets had come into common circulation. But from about the period of the return from exile, numerous secular or spurious writings, which scholars now call apocalyptic, began to multiply; and from thenceforth the seekers for truth had to decide which were from God and which were not. These apocalyptic writings were obviously imitations of such writings as the visions of Daniel, but were they inspired by the same Spirit as were his? Doubtless many people of those days were inclined to class them all together, unable to discern any great difference between them. But then as always these words of Christ were true: "My sheep hear my voice, and I know them, and they follow me." John 10:27. By New Testament times these spurious writings had multiplied, and in the post-apostolic period they increased greatly in numbers and in confusing and deceptive appeal. Practically every scrap of literature that has come down to us from the so-called "apostolic fathers" is of this character, a mixture of good and evil.

From those times to our own the people who wish to know the truth have had to discriminate, not so much between true and false living prophets, but between true and false writings. Today enticing voices are heard on the air over radio and television and by every other conceivable means of propaganda. No people in any previous age were ever "so be-thumped with words," good and bad, and obliged constantly to decide between them. How imperative

that we keep deciding according to Isaiah 8:20! When the unclean spirit of tradition and fear is cast out, the modern man boasts of being "free." He claims to have an open mind. The record of Genesis no longer restrains his imagination about the origin of the world; no longer do the thunders of Sinai bother him in matters of ethics or morals. He is strictly on his own, and his "open mind" has only one criterion: whether he likes an idea or dislikes it.

For example, Einstein not only congratulated himself that he was large-minded enough to outgrow the idea of a personal God and to substitute a pantheistic theory, but he then proceeded to discard Newton's cosmology, which implied that the universe must have some sort of center or administrative headquarters, about which all the parts of the universe revolve. So, after explaining away this view, he declared, "We thus free ourselves from the distasteful conception that the material universe ought to possess something of the nature of a center."—*The Theory of Relativity*, Fourth ed., pp. 106, 107. In other words, Einstein, like so many other moderns, uses his likes and dislikes to decide his views about the universe and its origin and then boasts about being scientific.

In our day every person in public life finds himself bombarded over the radio, through the mails, and by all the other media of modern mass communication by means of which the seven other spirits, worse than the first, seek to enter the vacuum made by the departure of the original occupant. Little wonder that "the power of Satan now to tempt and deceive is tenfold greater than it was in the days of the apostles."—*Spiritual Gifts*, Vol. 2, p. 277. Also we need to recognize that certain parts of the Bible are specially for our day, having been timed for the very last part of the last days.

To illustrate by what is perhaps an extreme case: Some of the Old Testament chapters consisting of long lists of names may seem of little interest or importance to us, but they were very interesting and important at the time they were written, and they can be of importance again. A. H. Sayce, eminent archaeologist of Oxford, once stated that some of these long lists of names are highly important in the researches of archaeology. They had convinced him and many others of the extreme accuracy of these ancient records and showed that these records must be of heavenly origin. In the very nature of the case, those divine predictions about the close of human history are now, for our times, of special importance and should have our special attention. When you hear someone belittling such studies as "doctrinal" and not "practical," just breathe a silent prayer, "Father, forgive them; for they know not what they do." "As we near the close of this world's history, the prophecies relating to the last days especially demand our study. The last book of the New Testament Scriptures is full of truth that we need to understand."—*Testimonies to Ministers*, p. 116. Again: "When the books of Daniel and Revelation are better understood, believers will have an entirely different religious experience."—*ibid.*, p. 114. And may God grant us such an experience.

Once more: "When we as a people understand what this book [Revelation] means to us, there will be seen among us a great revival."—*ibid.*, p. 113. For this "great revival" let us all study and pray. "When he, the Spirit of truth, is come, he will guide you into all truth." John 16:13. "If any of you lack wisdom, let him ask of God, that giveth to all men liberally, and upbraideth not; and it shall be given him." James 1:5. With these and similar promises before him, a man has no more excuse for remaining ignorant or in perplexity than he has for remaining a sinner. "None of the wicked shall understand; but the wise shall understand." Daniel 12:10.

11

## MONSTER FROM THE ABYSS

In the chapter of the Revelation about the Two Witnesses, which we have studied briefly, a special attack upon the Bible is mentioned, which was strikingly fulfilled at the time of the French Revolution. In Revelation 11:7, A.R.V., we read, "And when they shall have finished their testimony, the beast that cometh up out of the abyss shall make war with them, and overcome them, and kill them." This means that when they have finished or are finishing their testimony "in sackcloth" (see *The Great Controversy*, p. 268), which would be about the end of the 1260-year period, a violent campaign would be let loose against the Holy Scriptures. Every student of history knows that just such a deadly warfare did take place at the time of the French Revolution. Various public ceremonies were held to heap disgrace and contempt upon all religion, specifically upon the Sacred Scriptures. It would be difficult for ingenuity to think of some new method of shame and disgrace against the Bible which was not practiced during this insane period. And we need to remember that for the preceding century or more France had prided herself on being the most cultured and educated country in the world.

The subtle influences that prepared the way for this outbreak of hatred against everything sacred or divine are given in chapter 15 of *The Great Controversy*, pages 265-288. Only a brief summary can be given here. This national explosion, with many international echoes, was the culmination of a long series of events in which Rome suppressed God's Two Witnesses, the Holy Scriptures. But this Revolution was permitted to take place as a terrible example, a type, a preview, of what the entire world will yet experience as result of the modern anti-Genesis war against the Bible, under the influence of the modernistic philosophy of evolution.

We have been warned: "... the world-wide dissemination of the same teachings that led to the French Revolution—all are tending to involve the whole world in a struggle similar to that which convulsed France."—*Education*, p. 228. The work of the Reformation began early in France. It began among the educated teachers in the University of Paris and among the cultured members of the royal court. But in that age of the world nobody had yet had a glimpse of the idea of the complete separation of church and state; hence those who treasured the Bible and wanted to see its teachings carried out saw no other way than the political and military method for bringing this about. Accordingly, for centuries the conflict went on, legal decrees and armies being employed by both sides, sometimes the Reformers and sometimes the Papists being successful. Finally by the horrible Massacre of St. Bartholomew and by the still more fiendishly successful system of the dragonnades, by which a ruffian and licentious soldiery were quartered in the homes of the Huguenots, the Protestants were at last driven into exile or exterminated; and a dreary economic and cultural paralysis settled down upon the nation.

Since the king had undertaken to regulate the lives of everybody, he naturally had to care for the poorer classes. At length Paris contained so many beggars and so large a proportion of the population lived by the doles from the government, that the city has been compared to a monstrous almshouse. Ignorant, superstitious, penniless, with no useful work to occupy their time, the Parisian mobs became the tools by which wild demagogues could at short notice arouse a frenzy of excitement and lead them to wild and hysterical behavior, controlled by demons and bent on the suppression and ruin of the rulers in church and state, whom they looked upon as the cause of their misery. Only a few years previously the American colonies had declared their independence, and the wild mobs of Paris were fired by the echoes from across the Atlantic to attempt a similar democratic freedom. But they did not know how. The Americans, with chiefly an intelligent Protestant background, attained their

aims without disorder or internecine strife; but the Jacobins, with a background worse than paganism, set the world an example of what human beings are capable of when they throw off all restraint and come under the complete control of demons from the bottomless pit. Of course, in its sporadic, unorganized form atheism or infidelity has always existed. But in 1793 it was organized and gained control of one of the leading nations of Europe, and with fanatical zeal it set out to subdue or at least propagandize all the rest of the world.

In that particular form and manner its day was brief. In 1848, in the form of Marxian communism, it seemed on the point of gaining power again. Then in 1917 it captured Russia, and a little later China; and from these centers it has spread out over more than half of the world's population. This is its organized, or national, form. But we must not forget that every college and university throughout Europe and America, every newspaper, and every other source of publicity or entertainment has for more than two generations been engaged in a far more subtle but no less effective campaign against the Bible doctrine of creation, and thus against every other truth of revealed religion, of which creation is the logical and indispensable foundation. This is the beast's infiltration method, his fifth column. Throughout all of the so-called "free" peoples of the Western World, the philosophy of development or evolution during a thousand million years is almost universally taught and believed, with its corollary that man has grown up from some lower animal ancestors instead of having been created sinless and with no bias toward evil. Logically following the evolution theory is the conclusion that it is not man's fault but his misfortune that he is a sinner and subject to disease and death; hence if any being is responsible for the evil and misery in the world, it must be God Himself, who made the human race by this strange process of development from animal ancestors by the survival of the strongest and most ruthless.

Such are the radically changed ideas about God and all the fundamentals of ethics and religion which have now become almost universal. Of course, great numbers of the more logical men and women refuse to believe that an all-wise, merciful Creator could ever make the world by such a heartless, bungling process; and so they fall back on the pantheistic view, that, as Le Conte expressed it, "what we call evil is not a unique phenomenon confined to man, and the result of an accident [Adam's "fall"], but must be a great fact pervading all nature, and a part of its very constitution." This pessimistic pantheism is probably the most widely held form of philosophy at the present time. The universe, according to it, is the only deity; and it is intrinsically evil. This is a form of thinking scarcely to be distinguished from the paganism of Greece and Rome. No informed person can deny that this more polite, fashionable, parlor-pink form of infidelity is today almost universal throughout America and Europe. And this may be what the prophecy means by saying that the beast will again ascend from the bottomless pit, or the abyss.

*The Great Controversy*, pages 268, 269, explains the similar expression in Revelation 11:7 as meaning the "new manifestation of satanic power" which appeared in the French Revolution, and this we know was a preliminary appearance of what we now see in Russia and China as Marxian communism. This communism, however, is only a cruder form of the anti-Genesis apostasy so nearly universal in America and Western Europe. On this basis, the Americanization of religion throughout the Occidental world is only a variant form of the communism of China and Russia. In the light of heavenly truth these two systems are essentially twins. We know also that historically communism can be traced back through the French Revolution to a human perversion of the "two horns" of civil and religious liberty which lay at the foundation of America.

"At the same time anarchy is seeking to sweep away all law, not only divine, but human. The centralizing of wealth and power; the vast combinations for the enriching of the few at the expense of the many; the combinations of the poorer classes for the defense of their interests

and claims; the spirit of unrest, of riot and bloodshed; the world-wide dissemination of the same teachings that led to the French Revolution—all are tending to involve the whole world in a struggle similar to that which convulsed France.”—*Education*, p. 228.

Finally we have the important statements in the last half of Revelation 17 about the ten kingdoms agreeing to give their power to the beast—obviously the same beast which has been spoken of previously. In verse 8 the angel interpreter tells the apostle that it is “the beast that thou sawest” which he is talking about, not some entirely different one. In other words, it is the same beast power all through this chapter, just different aspects of the same devil-controlled organization, appearing at different times or on different occasions. The term “bottomless pit” or “abyss” is used as a rhetorical figure to represent the place of the demons. This beast comes directly from the headquarters of the evil spirits and fully represents the cause of Satan. Thus it is wholly evil, the very quintessence of rebellion against God and all that the government of God stands for.

This explanation also fits its use in Revelation 11:7, where it means the anarchistic form of unrestrained wickedness let loose at the time of the Red Terror of the French Revolution. Again at the very end of time the same spirit of unrestrained evil will once more prevail, for evil angels will then have entire control of the finally impenitent. Exactly the same conditions prevail at the time referred to in Revelation 17:8, after the deadly wound has prevailed for nearly two centuries. As we have learned, this period is at the very last of the time of the end, and the people of all civilized lands have become so accustomed to civil and religious liberty that they think these conditions must always continue. Therefore when the beast of despotism and intolerance appears once more, it is almost as if he had risen from the dead. He seems to come from the bottomless pit, the abyss, for this term is also used to represent the condition of the dead.

Then the angel explains about the ten kings, or kingdoms. At the time about which the angel was making this explanation to the apostle, which we have learned means our own time, the time of the end, the angel says that these ten kings “have received no kingdom as yet; but [will] receive power as kings one hour with the beast.” (Revelation 17: 12). Many have thought that all this refers to the past, during the Dark Ages, when Rome did compel all the kings of Western Europe to do her bidding. Uriah Smith so taught. But these achievements refers to the future, to the very closing hours of time. This is the interpretation given by Ellen G. White:

“The so-called Christian world is to be the theater of great and decisive actions. Men in authority will enact laws controlling the conscience, after the example of the papacy. Babylon will make all nations drink of the wine of the wrath of her fornication. Every nation will be involved ... “There will be a universal bond of union, one great harmony, a confederacy of Satan’s forces.”—*Manuscript 24*, 1891.

This interpretation brings these closing verses of this chapter into harmony with the preceding part. We can now see this entire chapter in its proper context and understand its importance in the closing gospel work in the very last of “the time of the end,” the “time of trouble, such as never has been since there was a nation till that time.” (Daniel 12:1, R.S.V). As already stated, two previous events were types on a small scale of this final universal chaos and anarchy—the last days of the siege of Jerusalem under Titus, and the period known as the Red Terror in Paris during the Revolution. When all restraint of civil law and social decency is gone, when hatred and the fierce elemental passions reign supreme, when each is determined to have his own way with no regard whatever for the wishes or the rights of others, when all alike are completely under demonic control—can anything more horrible be imagined? The successive stages leading to this final climax:

1. The present anti-Genesis apostasy, already nearly universal in Europe and America, is preparing the way for the triumph of Romanism. “Thus the false science of the present day, which undermines faith in the Bible, will prove as successful in preparing

the way for the acceptance of the papacy, with its pleasing forms, as did the withholding of knowledge in opening the way for its aggrandizement in the Dark Ages."—*The Great Controversy*, p. 573.

2. The crisis for the people of God comes when all the civil governments of the Christian world, following the example of Protestant America, demand that Sabbathkeepers conform in observing the same day of worship as the rest of the world. Their refusal to conform brings penalties culminating in the final decree of universal boycott and complete outlawry.

3. God intervenes at the last critical moment, but leaves His apparently helpless people here on earth a little longer among their furious enemies, as an exhibit before the onlooking universe of what His faithful servants can endure with His grace strengthening them.

4. All the latent forces of anarchy and social chaos will then take charge everywhere, and the entire world will witness scenes of horror similar to the last days of the siege of Jerusalem by Titus and the Red Terror of the French Revolution.

"Satan will then plunge the inhabitants of the earth into one great, final trouble. As the angels of God cease to hold in check the fierce winds of human passion, all the elements of strife will be let loose. ... The same destructive power exercised by holy angels when God commands, will be exercised by evil angels when He permits. There are forces now ready, and only waiting the divine permission, to spread desolation everywhere."—*ibid.*, p. 614.

These conditions will be universal over all the earth. The seven last plagues will be prevailing—even the regularities of natural law will seem to have come to an end, and nature will seem to have gone wild. During these frightful hours the people of God, scattered here and there over all the earth, will be living in the midst of this chaos and disintegration of nature, with no officiating High Priest to intercede for them, sustained only by their faith in the sure promises of God:

"God is our refuge and strength, a very present help in trouble. Therefore we will not fear though the earth should change, though the mountains shake in the heart of the sea; though its waters roar and foam, though the mountains tremble with its tumult." Psalm 46:1-3, R.S.V. "A thousand may fall at your side, ten thousand at your right hand; but it will not come near you. You will only look with your eyes and see the recompense of the wicked."

Psalm 91:7, 8, R.S.V.

1 2

# ARMAGEDDON

Every instructed believer in the second advent knows that the conflict between good and evil began at the headquarters of the universe with the revolt of Lucifer against the Son of God and His methods of government. Transferred to this earth, it has been prolonged for thousands of years. This conflict is now nearing its last stages; and the final showdown, the last crisis in the present order of earth's history, is what the Bible symbolically calls Armageddon.

Much ignorance has prevailed concerning this final crisis. Descriptions have been given of a gigantic military conflict in southwestern Asia between the Orient and the Occident. This "battle of that great day of God Almighty" has been described in detail according to the terms of the military usage with which the speaker or writer happened to be familiar, forgetful of the important fact that it is the King of kings and Lord of lords that goes forth at the head of the armies of heaven against all the combined powers of the entire world. Is such a battle or war going to be fought with machine guns, tanks, airplanes, and atomic bombs? Since the publication of W. E. Read's masterly discussion of this entire subject in Volume II of *Our Firm Foundation* (pp. 239-335), there has been little room for earlier views on this subject. Read's chapter makes clear the following among other important points:

1. The war (miscalled "battle") spoken of in the revelation under the term "Armageddon" will be simply the last of the great controversy which was started long ago by Lucifer at the headquarters of the universe. Several times during the intervening ages this contest has reached a crisis, and every time Lucifer has lost and the Son of God has been victorious. Armageddon is the name given to the last crisis of the series; at this time Lucifer, alias Satan or the devil, meets his final and complete defeat.
2. In Eden he won Adam and Eve over to his side, but at the last of the controversy he finds a company of 144,000 who take their stand on God's side and are so firm and dedicated to their Commander that Lucifer can do nothing with them. Like their divine Leader in Gethsemane, Satan finds no point on which he can deceive or ensnare them. He enlists the unredeemed rulers and peoples of the entire world on his side, and unitedly they make war against the Lamb and His loyal subjects; but "the Lamb will conquer them, for he is Lord of lords and King of kings, and those with him are called and chosen and faithful." (Revelation 17:14, R.S.V). Revelation 19:11-21 is the report of the same events, written from a slightly different point of view. Both passages duplicate or parallel the Armageddon passage, and all three deal with the same events.
3. It is a universal crisis, global in extent. There were no neutrals in the time of Noah; there will be none in Armageddon. The unclean spirits of devils will gather "the kings of the earth and of the whole world" (Revelation 16:14) to make war against God in the person of His people. Lined up on the side of the latter will be the resplendent King of kings and Lord of lords, with the "armies which were in heaven" following Him. (Revelation 19:14). On this side there will be no casualties, on the other side no survivors.
4. In three separate passages *The Great Controversy* makes it plain that the end of human probation will come, not amid the excitement and confusion of another world war, but "when religious leaders are magnifying the world's progress and enlightenment, and the people are lulled in a false security" (p. 38), "when the marriage bells are chiming, and all are looking forward to many years of worldly prosperity" (p. 338; see also p. 491).

5. As for the so-called military phase of Armageddon, this applies to the turmoil and utter confusion after probation closes. "After the saints had been delivered by the voice of God, the wicked multitude turned their rage upon one another. The earth seemed to be deluged with blood, and dead bodies were from one end of it to the other."—*Early Writings*, p. 290.

6. "It is after the saints are all sealed, and the mighty fiat goes forth from the throne of God, that the actual [military] war of the day of God takes place. This will be, in part at least, while the judgments of God are falling without mercy upon the shelterless heads of the ungodly, and will reach its climax when the Lord from heaven rides forth to have His controversy with the nations." So writes W. E. Read in his book *Our Firm Foundation*, Vol. II, p. 300.

But now we need to correlate the truth about Armageddon with the general subject of the time of the end so that we may see its relation to the overall picture, for in the plan of the King of eternity Armageddon will be an important milestone along the path toward the final settlement of the sin problem. All of us need to become more intelligent concerning these matters, for we all need to "understand the progress of events in the marshaling of the nations for the final conflict of the great controversy."—*Testimonies*, Vol. 8, p. 307.

Some misunderstandings need to be clarified. First, about the name "Armageddon" itself. The best scholarship is now almost universally agreed that this name is symbolic, for it is an invented name and has no specific geographical location. Etymologically it has no connection with Megiddo except in assonance, a slight resemblance in sound. It is used in the Revelation as a symbol of the final struggle between good and evil, the last moral and religious crisis in the earthly history of mankind.

All nations and peoples throughout the entire earth are involved. A dozen passages in both the Old Testament and the New so declare. And in the very nature of things this must be true. Then what a travesty of the facts to speak of it as a military affair in a little corner of southwestern Asia! At the beginning of this Armageddon passage, giving the events taking place under the sixth plague (Revelation 16:12-16), we are told about the drying up of the great river Euphrates, "that the way of the kings of the east might be prepared."

This also is figurative, for in any modern warfare the drying up of even the largest river would be of no importance one way or another. Symbolic, yes; but of what? God's way of looking at events in our times, or even of describing them for us in these last days, can best be understood by studying His way of dealing with events in olden times, for then the providence of God showed us the pattern of how He manages the affairs of the nations. "For whatsoever things were written aforetime were written for our learning." Romans 15:4. He puts no premium on ignorance or mental laziness.

We have only ourselves to blame if we do not use the Old Testament records and their prophecies to help us understand such texts as we are here considering. In scores of places the Israelites were warned beforehand about what Babylon would do to them. Long before they had become captives and slaves in Babylon, they were told of Cyrus and his Persians who would come from the east to deliver them. One of his spectacular acts in capturing Babylon and thus setting free the captive Jews would be by diverting the waters of the Euphrates, these waters having been for centuries one of the main protectors of Babylon. Then when Babylon had been taken, Cyrus set free the captive Jews and allowed them to return to their own homeland. All this is the divine background for what is said under the sixth plague about the drying up of the great river Euphrates, that the way of the kings of the east might be prepared. A careful study of this entire account of the events of the sixth plague will convince any impartial reader that "the kings of the east" are in antithetical contrast to "the kings of the earth and of the whole world," as mentioned in verse 14. Since

the latter are the enemies of God and His people, it follows that the "kings of the east" must be on God's side, and thus must be regarded as deliverers, just as Cyrus and his Persians, who came from the east, became the deliverers of the Jews on the occasion of the destruction of ancient Babylon. Modern Babylon the Great also is protected by her "many waters" (Revelation 17:1), which symbolize the many "peoples, and multitudes, and nations, and tongues" (verse 15). When these multitudes awake to the way they have been deceived by the great harlot—an awakening which will occur under the preceding plagues, but too late to do them any good—this sad awakening will constitute the drying up of the Euphrates and will prepare the way for God's heavenly angels to come for the final and everlasting deliverance of His sorely beleaguered people.

Two other scriptures deal with the same events about Armageddon and mean the same thing. In Revelation 19:11-21 the King of kings and Lord of lords is described as going forth on a white horse, with all the armies of heaven attending. In opposition, or arrayed in battle against them, are "the beast, and the kings of the earth, and their armies." (Verse 19). But what can all the powers of earth accomplish in such an unequal conflict? Ellen G. White makes it very clear that this passage is equivalent to the Battle of Armageddon:

"The battle of Armageddon is soon to be fought. He on whose vesture is written the name, King of kings, and Lord of lords, is soon to lead forth the armies of heaven."—*Testimonies*, Vol. 6, p. 406.

The other exactly parallel passage is Revelation 17:14, where the ten kings "agree," or come to "one mind," and "make war with the Lamb, and the Lamb shall overcome them; for he is Lord of lords, and King of kings." No one can fail to notice the identical language here that is used in Revelation 19, and both are equivalent to the Armageddon passage. All three mean the same last conflict between good and evil, when the Son of God goes forth to make a full end of all human and satanic opposition, the war of the "great day of God Almighty." Everybody on earth must meet this Armageddon either on one side or the other. No neutrals will exist in that day. Dante pictured the hottest fires of hell for those who had tried to be neutral in an hour of moral crisis; and Providence will ensure that all will have to be counted on God's side or against Him. "Once to every man and nation comes the moment to decide, In the strife of Truth with Falsehood, for the good or evil side." During the long centuries since the beginning, a few individuals here and there in every generation have attained a maturity of character, when, like Job, they could stand the utmost assaults of evil. They not only trusted to Christ's righteousness as imputed to them, but they had this righteous character so imparted to them and incorporated into their being that they were in every way victorious against Satan in all his disguises.

It has also been universally true that every organized society during all the long centuries has always been a failure. Before the Flood the Sethites failed as a group, and the earth became universally corrupt. The Israelites failed during the time of the judges, also during the glorious prosperity of David and Solomon; and the two kingdoms had to go into captivity. After the exile it was no better, and finally they crucified their long-promised Anointed King. Pentecost brought divine power to the group and gave them a new start; but Paul recognized that the mystery of iniquity was already working in his day, and by the time of Constantine the church as a body sold out and formed an adulterous marriage with the enemy. The Reformation seemed to promise better things; but every single one of the Reformed churches failed to separate from the civil power, and all alike used Caesar's lash to compel obedience to apostate ecclesiastical demands.

The divine Head of the church has determined, however, to exhibit before the universe a pure church, without spot or wrinkle or any such thing, a church purified in doctrine, keeping all the commandments, and having the righteousness of Christ so incorporated into their inmost being that they will be able to endure without a continuing Mediator all that the enemy can bring against them and come off victorious over the final assaults of the beast and his image. "In their mouth no lie was found, for they are spotless." Revelation 14:5; R.S.V. "Glorious things are spoken of thee, O city of God." Psalm 87:3. We are assured that "the prayer of Christ that His church may be one as He was one with His Father, will finally be answered."—*Testimonies to Ministers*, p. 50. "When the storm of persecution really breaks upon us, the true sheep will hear the true Shepherd's voice. ... The people of God will draw together and present to the enemy a united front. ... Then will the message of the third angel swell to a loud cry, and the whole earth will be lightened with the glory of the Lord."—*Testimonies*, Vol. 6, p. 401.

The same perfect order and harmony that prevail in heaven will be seen here among God's people on earth. As seen in a preview, "they moved in exact order, like a company of soldiers."—*Early Writings*, p. 271. They will keep step with one another everywhere on this round globe, because all are listening to the same drumbeat of the heavenly orchestra. For "now in these last days, while God is bringing His children into the unity of the faith, there is more real need of order than ever before."—*ibid.*, p. 97.

We all realize that we must have a special preparation to face the crisis ahead; but how are we to obtain it? Our leaders constantly remind us of our Laodicean condition; but this condition, which is simply the modern form of the ancient Pharisaism, is no more surely shown than in the widespread disposition to belittle what is termed "doctrinal" teaching or preaching, implying that we already have all the light we need concerning the prophecies of Daniel and the Revelation. The saintly founders of our work never took this position.

Such leaders as James White, Joseph Bates, and Ellen G. White always said that we must constantly be looking for more light and a better understanding of these divine blueprints of the times ahead, for only by thus receiving fresh light concerning them will we be able to survive the perils of the last great conflict. True, we must be careful in trying to interpret unfulfilled prophecy. But there is another side to this situation. We are now so near the final climax that unless we correctly understand these prophecies about the days ahead, they cannot do us any good, and we are likely to miss their timely messages. On this point we have the following warning:

"Are we to wait until the fulfillment of the prophecies of the end before we say anything concerning them? Of what value will our words be then? Shall we wait until God's judgments fall upon the transgressor before we tell him how to avoid them? Where is our faith in the word of God? Must we see things foretold come to pass before we will believe what He has said? In clear, distinct rays light has come to us, showing us that the great day of the Lord is near at hand, 'even at the doors.' Let us read and understand before it is too late."—*Testimonies*, Vol. 9, p. 20.

We pray for a revival and reformation, but we have been told plainly how we are to receive them. Can we expect God to approve our human efforts to bring them about while we are neglecting the methods He has already selected and approved? "When we as a people understand what this book [the Revelation] means to us, there will be seen among us a great revival."—*Testimonies to Ministers*, p. 113. This is because the correction of a doctrinal error can have a vitalizing and an electrifying power upon both body and soul. This is because God's prophecies are implied promises. When believed and accepted by faith, they become parts of the store of "great and precious promises," whereby we become "partakers of the divine nature," and escape "the corruption that is in the world." (2 Peter 1:4)

We pray for a better religious experience but neglect the very means by which it may be attained. "When the books of Daniel and Revelation are better understood, believers will have an entirely different religious experience."—*Testimonies to Ministers*, p. 114. No progress will ever be made by belittling and disparaging careful and correct doctrinal standards. Error and false ideas never sanctify, but the truth of God always has a sanctifying influence. When the special truths planned by God for our time are received and accepted, they will always result in an improved religious experience. Our divine Saviour has a schedule and a method for bringing about the results He desires, and He is not going to honor times and methods other than those He has ordained.

We hear much about receiving Christ's righteousness, but this almost always refers to the *imputation* of this righteousness. This is highly important as a beginning, but there is a much higher stage of attainment, when Christ's righteous character becomes *imparted* to us, when we become mature Christians, complete overcomers in His name and by His grace. This maturity of imparted character is the prerequisite for receiving the seal of God, so that we can endure and become members of the triumphant 144, 000. "Let us strive with all the power that God has given us to be among the hundred and forty-four thousand."—Ellen G. White, in *Review and Herald*, March 9, 1905. "There is before the church the dawn of a bright, glorious day, if she will put on the robe of Christ's righteousness, withdrawing from all allegiance to the world."—*Testimonies*, Vol. 8, p. 11.

"It is impossible to give any idea of the experience of the people of God who shall be alive upon the earth when celestial glory and a repetition of the persecutions of the past are blended. They will walk in the light proceeding from the throne of God. By means of the angels there will be constant communication between heaven and earth."—*ibid.*, Vol. 9, p. 16. "We are homeward bound. ... It will not be long till we shall see Him in whom our hopes of eternal life are centered. And in His presence, all the trials and sufferings of this life will be as nothingness."—*ibid.*, p. 287.

IN CONCLUSION, YOU HAVE JUST TO LOOK AT GENESIS CHAPTER 4 TO FULLY UNDERSTAND WHAT THE BATTLE OF ARMAGEDDON IS ALL ABOUT AND HOW INTENSE IT IS. BE BLESSED FOLKS